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HOME ANGEL.

H. Andrews Jr.

THE

# H O M E A N G E L.

BY

L. B. URBINO.

“ In the clear heaven of her delighted eye,  
An angel guard of loves and graces lie;  
Aronnd her knees domestic duties meet,  
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.”

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## P R E F A C E .

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I AM aware of the inutility of prefaces to most readers; but I wish to tell those, in whose hands this little book may fall, that I began with the idea of writing a translation, but changed my mind after a page or two. Those who read French will find “Esther de Chaseuil” a very pretty story—much prettier, perhaps, than mine, though of a different character.

I have seen many brave people struggling through life with stout hearts and steady purpose, and I have invariably found that they are better satisfied with the allotments of Providence, and more useful to mankind, than those who have never been driven to exertion by necessity.

It seems to me that industry contributes very much to our comfort in all stations and conditions of life; but there is a greater difference between systematic, quiet industry, and impulsive, noisy bustle, than most people imagine. The one is useful and cheerful, always ready to do anything for anybody, having time enough; the other, im-

patient and unhappy, troubled with much labor, having no time to help a distressed brother, ever worn and haggard, though doing little or nothing.

Esther, I believe, understood the secret of living so as to wear a cheerful face even in the darkest trials. If her example was good, may we all profit by it.

L. B. U.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ESTHER'S NEW HOME.

THE clock of Saint Philip struck five. The rising sun shed its vermillion light on the noble mansion which attracts the eye of every stranger in that vicinity, and glanced into a chamber where the silence and repose of night reigned. This chamber, whose windows opened upon a garden, was arranged in a simple and exquisite manner. The window-curtains were of white damask. The toilet-table, ornamented with rich lace, bespoke the wealth and taste of its owner. A clock and alabaster vases decorated the chimney. Pictures representing Christ and his disciples were suspended in rich frames; roses and the lily of the valley were here and there in dishes held by marble cherubs. Who occupied this chamber? A young girl, reader, whom I will presently introduce to you.

Just as the alabaster clock repeated the hour struck by Saint Philip, the young girl, upon whose lips played a sweet smile, opened her eyes. One of her arms fell gently upon the embroidered quilt, and with the other she drew aside the white silk curtains, and looked about, as if to see where she was. Apparently happy thoughts were crowding into her mind, for she smiled and ejaculated in a low, but sweet voice: "Heavenly Father! how good art thou to thy handmaid!" Then, rising hastily, she caught a glimpse of her own beautiful face in the large mirror which hung in front of her bed, and said, "How contented I am!" Throwing a shawl over her shoulders, she walked around the room, stopping before every article of furniture with surprise and admiration, and exclaiming, "Beautiful! beautiful!"

At the windows she remained some time longer inhaling the perfume of roses with which the alley was bordered; then seating herself thoughtfully, she said, "O, how pretty is all this! My dear, good father, how much trouble you have taken for me! How could you know, so well, what would please me! How I do love my beau-

tiful white chamber ! How happy I shall be here ! What a difference between this and my little room in the country ! Yet I was happy there ! ” added she. “ Every one was kind to me ; the country is always smiling, and the sun shines brighter on the green fields than on these stone houses ; there are as beautiful flowers on the hill-side as in this garden. O, these rosebuds ! Dear rosebuds, how I love you ! ”

Then, with a heart filled with gratitude to the Giver of all things, she knelt beside her bed, and, leaning her face upon her hands, thus gave vent to her feelings : “ Great God, I thank thee for all these beautiful things around me ; for these sweet flowers which breathe freshness and love ; for this white drapery, which speaks of purity ; for the bright sun, emblem of thy glory ; for all that is under my feet and over my head ; for this comfortable bed, and the sweet dreams of my guardian spirit ! I thank thee for the thousand sources of happiness in the beautiful world in which I live ! I thank thee for the silent joys which spring from my own glad heart ! ”

She was still at prayer when a middle-aged

woman half opened the door, and said, in a low voice,

“Already risen !”

“Is it you, Mrs. Abel ?” cried the young girl, running to embrace her. “Good morning, dear friend ; how glad I am to see you first ! It is not very early,—look at the clock,—in the country I was dressed every morning at five !”

“That is a good habit, but you will soon lose it here,” replied the good woman, smiling. “We do not rise in the city as in the country. I thought you would be too tired to wake early, after the excitement of last evening.”

“The thought of being with you and my father has caused me to wake. What a change since yesterday ! Certainly I was happy in the country ; shall I not be more so here ?”

“O yes, you must and will be as happy as any one can expect to be in this changing world ! You are good and beautiful ; your father is immensely rich, and you are an only child ; this will make you happy in the eyes of the world ; but, my dear, your happiness depends upon yourself ; you are in a responsible situation, and to the

evenness of your temper, and your own quiet conscience, must you look for that peace which man cannot take away. I am glad that your father has taken so much pains to make your room beautiful ; for I think the sight of beautiful things does us good.”

“My dear nurse, the sight of you does me good ! ” said Esther.

Mrs. Abel embraced her affectionately, saying, “I must call you my child, my own dear child, at least when we are alone ! ”

“O, always, always ! ” said she, pressing the hands of her foster mother to her breast. “Last evening I was grieved when you called me Miss Le Gendre. If company requires cold ceremony, I would much prefer being alone. Are you not almost a mother to me ? I’m sure you were the first person I loved, and, for a long time, I loved you only. I have known my father but very little, and when I was small I feared him much.”

“And how do you feel towards him now ? ” asked the anxious woman, with some disquiet.

“At present,” replied Esther, “I love him with all my heart ; but, I cannot help having a

fear of him. I don't know how it is, but with all his kindness, there is a something. I feel towards him as I did towards our teacher, who made us all tremble when she frowned."

"But your father is very, very kind!" ejaculated Mrs. Abel.

"O, I know it, I know it!" answered she, with animation. "And I shall understand him soon, I hope. You must remember that I am a stranger here; yesterday was the first time I entered his house."

"Poor child! It is too true!" murmured Mrs. Abel. Then, making Esther sit down by her side, and looking at her with tender solicitude, she added, "My dear Esther, do you know that your father will present you, this evening, to his friends? Does not the idea of doing the honors of the house, at your age, trouble you?"

"O, mercy, no!" exclaimed she, with careless gayety. "I intend to amuse myself. They can expect nothing from a country girl like me! I shall act myself!"

"But will not the display of rich dresses and jewelry dazzle you? Don't you feel concerned

about your own looks, and the impression you will make?"

"Not at all," said Esther; "you just put it into my head."

"What a child you are!" said Mrs. Abel.

"Very true, I am a child," continued Esther, becoming more thoughtful. "I did not know how ignorant and simple I was till yesterday. Since then I have made a serious reflection."

"Ah! And what was it?"

"I have asked myself why, since I was destined to live in the world, my father has caused me to be educated at a village school. I almost fear that I shall miss the unrestrained simplicity which I have hitherto enjoyed. I can never be a fashionable lady; I have no taste for what is called society. I wish I could be with you and my father."

"You will be with us, my dear; and as to your education, your father wished you to be as the ladies of olden times, a woman, a true woman! The education of the boarding-schools of Paris was not in conformity with his ideas. He did not wish that you should make a display of learning,

talents, or accomplishments ; he wished you to learn to be good, and, for that purpose, he placed you with honest, good people, who could realize the value of an immortal soul, committed to their care. You have been with them sixteen years, — no, ten years, for you are but sixteen now, — and you seem to be what I have prayed that you might be. God grant that your entrance into this house may be like the shining of light into the dark places of the earth ! ”

“ During these long years it has often seemed to me that I must be with my relations ; that I had no father’s house to go to ; he came to see me so seldom, and you almost never,” said she, with a sigh.

“ Alas, my child ! ” replied Mrs. Abel ; “ it was impossible for me to be with you, and your father has spent almost all his time in travelling. As for me, I may say I have never been free. While my poor, sick husband lived, I could not leave him. He is no more, and, God willing, I shall devote the remainder of my life to you, though I am but a poor, ignorant woman, who knows but little of the world, such as you will be obliged to

move in, and can give you no advice as to the manner in which you should demean yourself in it ; but, perhaps, in matters which concern your interior life, and the feelings of your heart, I shall be able to help, or at least to counsel you ; for love will often supply the place of wisdom, and I have loved and do love you as my own child."

There was a pause, then Mrs. Abel continued : " My child, there are persons, whom you must never question."

" Do you refer to my father ? " asked Esther, blushing slightly. " Do you think he was angry with me last evening ? "

" Not angry, but sad ; he is always sad if your mother is but mentioned."

" How unfortunate ! There are so many things that I would like to ask about her. I have thought so long about it. But you can tell me something about my dear mother, can you not ? Did not you know her ? "

Mrs. Abel, sighing, shook her head.

" But you must have heard her spoken of ; she had but just died when you came to live with my father. Were not the people who had waited

upon her there? Tell me, was she beloved, regretted?"

"Yes, they said she was gentle and good,—they loved her devotedly. From what I have heard, I doubt not but that she is an angel in heaven."

"O, I have seen an angel, many times, in my dreams! Was it my mother?" sobbed Esther. "Tell me, pray tell me, all you know about her!"

"Alas, my dear! Do not question me now. 'T is a sad tale, and will make you weep. Your father will not like to see your eyes red. You must appear as cheerful as possible for his sake as well as your own. I read, somewhere in a newspaper the other day, that cheerfulness is a duty which every one owes to society."

Esther inclined her head, with a gesture of resigned submission. For a moment she seemed to wish to conceal some sad and troubled thought, then she burst into tears.

"What is the matter? What ails you?" asked Mrs. Abel, sorrowfully.

"Nothing, nothing!" replied she, sobbing.

“ ‘T is but a remembrance of my childhood, which I hoped to have forgotten.’”

“ Tell me what troubles you, my good child,” said the nurse.

“ When I was a very little girl some ladies from the city stopped at the house where I lived. One of them asked many questions about me, and I heard them tell her, in a low voice, that my mother died on board of a ship, and was buried in the sea. These words made a deep impression on me, and many nights have I awoke, with a shudder, thinking I saw the dead body in the water, swimming near me. My mother ! dear mother ! O, tell me ! — was it so ? ”

“ Alas, my child ! ‘T is but too true ! ” replied Mrs. Abel. “ I supposed you were ignorant of the circumstances of your mother’s death, and, therefore, did not wish to speak to you of it.”

“ Now you will tell me all,” said Esther, with a sad curiosity. “ Tell me how you came to live with my father, and all you know about my mother and my family, — what has happened, — all you can remember.”

“ Were I to live a hundred years I never

could forget what I know of your mother!" responded Mrs. Abel, with emotion. "About the first of Feb., 183-, the fine brig St. Jeromino, of Cuba, was signalized in the port of Havre. The weather had been stormy, and was very boisterous through the night; fears were entertained that the brig would be lost; however, she was seen riding into port, next morning, dismasted, and bearing the marks of a hard struggle with the raging elements. Many people rushed to the quay to see her enter. I went also, hoping to obtain news from my husband, who had been long absent. I held my infant, Michael, in my arms. Suddenly a man, pushing his way in the crowd, came to me, and desired me, in the name of God, to go with him on board the brig, saying that a little innocent was perishing for want of that sustenance which I could give. I followed him. O, my child, what a picture! Everything in the cabin, to which I was conducted, was in confusion. The furniture here and there; rich silk curtains soaking in sea-water; the bed empty and undressed; at its side were lying the clothes of a woman. A mulattress was seated in a corner

holding on her knees an infant, a few days old, who seemed almost dead. This infant was you, Esther. The woman put you into my arms ; you was cold, and your eyes were closed. I pressed you to my warm bosom, and, with great difficulty, succeeded in imparting a little nourishment ; and, whilst I longed to see you revive, I involuntarily exclaimed, 'The Lord's will be done !' I was so much taken up with you, that I did not, at first, notice a man seated at the foot of the bed, with his face turned towards the curtain.

" 'That is Count Le Gendre ; he is the father of this poor little child,' said the woman, observing me look at him.

" 'And, the mother ?' said I.

" She drew near me, and said, in a low voice, ' She died, four days ago, an hour after the birth of this child. You should have seen that sweet young woman ! O, it almost broke my heart to have her thrown into the sea ! But she has gone to heaven, I 'm sure ! She said the angels were calling her. It was the dreadful storm that excited her ; if she had been on shore she would have lived. There sits the count. He speaks not :

he takes no nourishment; he will die.' The man who sought me, came and begged me to do something for his master. 'I have tried in vain to make him speak! What shall I do? Heavenly Father, help!'

"'He only can help,' said I. Then a thought came to me. You had taken a little nourishment, and seemed reanimated. I arose and approached your father. I trembled; I wept; I could not speak. He turned his head towards me; his eyes were dry, and his look wandering. I placed you upon his knees, saying that you were a little angel, whom God had sent to console him. At first, he hardly noticed you. I spoke of your mother; of your dependence upon him, your only parent; of the Providence of God, etc. After a while, he began to weep, and then to press you to his bosom with bitter groans and sighs. He appeared calmer, and, the same day, went to a hotel, where he secluded himself, almost entirely, for six months. His health was impaired, and it became necessary for him to travel. From that time, he has seldom remained in Paris more than

a few weeks at one time, and has seen you about once a year, I think."

"O, my mother! my poor, dear mother! — and my father, how unhappy he must have been!" cried Esther, her face bathed in tears, and with the expression of profound grief. "Now I understand why he looked so sadly, and answered me as he did."

"Time has not yet consoled him," replied Mrs. Abel; "but he represses everything that can recall this sad scene. He never speaks of your mother, even to me, and sits, hour after hour, in a dreamy mood. O, my child, may God have chosen you to minister to his spiritual wants! I fear that he has not learned to trust in that Being, who suffers us to be afflicted, that we may turn from our evil ways, and find peace with him."

"My dear Mrs. Abel, is there any token or remembrance of my mother that I can have — a portrait, some hair, anything she wore?" said Esther, interrupting the good woman, and evidently absorbed in the thought of her mother.

"I am certain that nothing of hers remains," replied Mrs. Abel. "Her domestics told me that

your father married her in St. Augustine ; that she was very beautiful, and, for love of him, willingly left her home, and all her friends, to come to a strange country."

"Then I have relatives in America ! Shall I ever know them ? Are they there now ?" eagerly inquired Esther.

"That I know not ; but I am sure that you have no relations in France, at present. Your father's name is much respected, but he seems to stand alone."

"Will my father travel more, or shall we always live here ? I would like to go to America," continued Esther, after a pause.

"Your father says that he shall remain here," replied Mrs. Abel ; "that is why he has bought this house, and arranged it with so much magnificence. Now he is no more isolated ; you are with him, and your presence will bring happiness into this house."

Esther lifted her clasped hands, and said, "God grant it !"

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PRESENTATION.

THE evening of the same day Esther met her father in the reception room a few hours previous to the arrival of the expected guests. She was dressed in a simple and tasteful manner. On her head was the most beautiful diadem which can encircle the brow of youth, a garland of roses. There were roses also in the folds of her snow-white dress, and the mild carnation of the flowers increased the lustre of her black hair, and harmonized better with her pale-brown skin than the brilliancy of precious gems or stones. The count regarded her with a mixture of joy and pride, of love and sadness. Then he sighed deeply, as if this contemplation had brought some sad remembrance to him. Making an effort to appear tranquil and gay, he said, with a half smile, "Well, my daughter, how do you like the looks of

things? Is the house arranged according to your taste?"

"Indeed, I don't know, papa. I see everything beautiful; but — but —" said she.

"But what, my child?" interrupted her father.

"Are all these things necessary? We lived very comfortably in the country without all these things with which this house is filled."

"My dear, innocent Esther, you must not expect to live in Paris as you did with good Mrs. Porter. Here we must be in society, and I hope my daughter will honor her father's house," said Count Le Gendre, affectionately.

"I hope that we are not to have company every day; — I wish much to live with you and Mrs. Abel," rejoined Esther.

"You are my all, Esther," said her father, seriously; "for you I have purchased this house and all this elegant furniture, which seems of so little consequence to you; for your sake I have given this entertainment, and if it is not congenial to your taste, we will select a few intimates. We can live as retired here as we choose. To see you happy is all I wish; the world has no charms for

me." Here he turned away, and paced the floor as if unconscious of the presence of another being.

M. Le Gendre was still in the prime of life, but he bore evident marks of inward grief and the exposure of fifteen years of travel. His figure was remarkably beautiful. At a glance one saw that he belonged to a northern race. But Esther had neither his traits nor his physiognomy ; she was of a type more beautiful and rare. Still, there was a strong resemblance between the fresh visage of the child and the wasted beauty of the father. She charmed most by the striking contrast between her waving black hair, satin skin, and ruby lips, of the torrid zone, and her clear blue eyes and pensive look, so characteristic of the north. In her manner she was simple as a little child.

She had stepped into a side-room, and sat with her hands upon her knees, when her father, roused from his meditation, followed her. He looked at her pensive face an instant, and then said, "Esther, of what are you thinking ?"

She sprung, and blushed as if surprised by a culpable thought; then turned her head to conceal her tears.

“My daughter,” cried the count, in a sad tone, “why this sorrow? Why do you weep? What is the matter with you?”

“O, pardon, pardon, my father!” replied she. “I cannot, I dare not tell you!”

He looked at her anxiously, and said, with a voice full of sweetness and tenderness, which strongly contrasted with the severity of his words,

“What signify these tears? Speak, Esther, speak! I require it!”

“Heavenly Father!” murmured she, raising her eyes to heaven.

“Esther, you *dare* not!” cried the count, with an air of sad reproach.

She joined her hands as if to ask pardon for the pain she had caused him, and, trying to surmount her fear and her emotion, she said, “Alas! this evening, in seeing myself thus adorned, at the moment when I am to appear for the first time in society, I feel very sad. I think of a person very dear to us, and I weep to see her place between us vacant; this is what I have not dared to say to you, my dear father.”

The count inclined towards his child, embraced

her, and placing a finger upon her mouth, made a sign that all was said upon this subject; then he walked about, to allow her time to recruit herself.

Esther seated herself at the window, and turned her moist eyes to the fresh breeze which stirred the leaves of the trees. Tears still trembled upon her long eyelids; she passed her handkerchief over her face, and tried to recall the force and calmness which she should so soon need.

At this moment some one passed under the window. Esther quickly retired.

“There are people in the garden,” said she, approaching her father.

“Some one has come early, and walks in the garden,” replied he. “Without doubt there are many in the hall awaiting us. It is time to receive them. Come, Esther, come.”

The doors were opened. The brilliancy of the lights in the gallery, where the company began to assemble, dazzled the young girl.

“Come, my daughter,” repeated the count, with an accent of proud satisfaction, as well as careful protection; “they wait for us.”

Esther placed her trembling hand upon the arm of her father, and allowed herself to be led into that brilliant assemblage, with a heart beating violently. There was a mixture of beautiful and brilliant women, and men eminent for their talents or fortune.

Mrs. Abel, in a modest matronly attire, watched the varying expression of her countenance as different individuals were presented to her. Inwardly she prayed that that pure, innocent spirit might not be sullied by coming in contact with gross and sensual beings, whose diminutive souls seemed hidden under a weight of gold.

In comparing Esther with others, she could not help saying to herself, she is the queen of the *réveille-matin*.

At first, Esther seemed at a loss for words to answer the flatteries which annoyed her; but, after a time, her good common sense came so well into play, that she found no difficulty in rebutting those young exquisites, who thought they must talk nonsense to make themselves agreeable to so young, rich and beautiful a girl.

There were mothers, who felt anxious to form

an acquaintance on account of their sons. There were men of great name and medium fortune, who thought their fame might be an object to a millionaire. Sympathy and admiration for the young lady were mixed with calculations, projects and interests. A gentleman of middle age, whose religious character and seclusive habits unfitted him for fashionable society, was very much sought for this evening.

He was an Englishman, an old and well-tried friend of M. Le Gendre, and he was the only one of all that large concourse who could give any reliable information respecting the count, and his intentions with regard to his daughter.

Mr. Day had entered college with a view of becoming a clergyman, but ill health had driven him from his books, and for some years he had managed to live comfortably on a very small income, devoting his time to the education and improvement of the poor. The hope of making himself useful to his friend as well as others, had induced him to take up his abode for a time in Paris. He was active, cheerful and agreeable; more interested in the young than in people of his

own age. He was very penetrating, and, when occasion offered, sarcastic.

“Deacon,” said a smiling dame, “why did you not speak of that charming young lady? I did n’t know that the count had any children.”

“She is nothing but a child,” said the deacon, carelessly.

“We used to be very intimate with the Le Gendres, but since the death of the old folks we have lost sight of the others. The count has spent nearly sixteen years in foreign parts, I am told. We believe he means to dazzle us now. What became of his brother? How much property did he inherit?”

“More than three millions. He will never marry again, and this child will be the richest in Paris,” replied Mr. Day, coolly.

The lady pretended not to notice these words, but continued: “The brother who died was very different from this gentleman; he was so simple that we sometimes thought him a fool.”

“Not so much of a fool as many people with whom I am acquainted,” retorted the deacon; “but he had no fondness for society, and when by

chance he was thrown into company, he appeared more foolish than he really was."

"Why, deacon," interrupted the lady, "who is that tall gentleman, who sits beside Mlle. Le Gendre? See how serious both look. I should think he was a minister, and she about being converted."

"That, madame," replied he, "is the son of an American planter; his name is De Lacy. If he is not a minister, he is a good preacher; and I am not sure but his sermons might be more useful to us than to the child with whom he is speaking."

"Is that De Lacy? I have long wished to see him. My son says he is rich; but no one could judge so from his simple style of living. When he pleases he is very fascinating; but the young ladies make no impression on him. I declare that is the cold, puritanical bachelor!"

"You have said enough," said the deacon, with an ironical smile; "you have drawn a fine portrait of that good man."

When De Lacy left Esther, the deacon ap-

proached, and placing his arm familiarly in that of the young man, led him to an open window.

“My young friend, how have you been entertained ?” inquired he.

“O, highly ! Since I left home,” replied he, “I have not seen a person who pleased me so much. There is no art, no coquetry about her ; she seems an embodiment of truthfulness ; and glad am I to say that all this pomp and luxury of her father’s establishment has little or no effect on her. She is better pleased with a rose-bud, than a jewelled ring.”

“You seem quite fascinated, and I think your judgment good ; but it is not best to be hasty. I hope you will have an opportunity of seeing her often. Situated as she is, you may be very useful to her. Her father, though a good man, has little of that spirit which could cheer him on to the end of his journey. He is at times moodish and desponding. All his immense wealth avails nothing, if the heart is not right,” said the deacon, seriously.

The heart of De Lacy beat violently ; he felt a peculiar interest in that young girl, and in her

father. He had seen her, as she sat leaning against the window, before the arrival of the company. It was he who walked in the garden ; he heard her sigh, and saw her weep, and he was affected by it. During their conversation, he had asked her why she wept, and she had told him with all the simplicity of an honest heart.

The deacon tapped the young man on the shoulder, pointing to a lady who approached them.

“Sarah ! She here, too ! It seems as if she were a shadow about me ! Why does she follow me ?” said De Lacy.

“Remember, she is your cousin, and wishes to favor you with her presence ; — “perhaps ‘t is all kindness on her part,” said the elder gentleman.

The woman to whom he pointed slowly advanced, leaning upon the arm of a young man. She was very beautiful, but her beauty was languishing and faded.

“Cousin,” said she to De Lacy, “what an agreeable surprise ! I thought you never went into such gay company. You did not tell me that you were coming.”

"Is that so surprising? You did not tell me that you were invited," coldly replied De Lacy.

"O, no! I came here by chance, merely. I thought my evening was engaged," continued the lady, with an accent which betrayed a secret reproach. Lowering her voice, she added, "Did you receive my letter?"

He made a sign in the affirmative.

"Then you did not expect to find me here this evening," retorted she. "I came in just as you were sitting by Mlle. Le Gendre. I must acknowledge that I was astonished to see you so much occupied with the frivolous French child. 'T is damp here; let us enter."

"I hope you will enjoy yourself, madame," said De Lacy, bowing and turning from her. "It is time for us to go, my friend," said he to the deacon; and they took their leave.

By and by, all the company retired slowly, and without noise, as the wave which abandons the shore.

Mrs. Abel and Esther were thankful to know that all were gone; and the latter, too tired

and confused to perform her evening devotion, closed her eyes, after a hasty acknowledgment of God's bounty. In her sleep, she thought of one whose voice was sweet to her ear, and she dreamed of a home in far-off America.

## CHAPTER III.

### NEW PLANS.

AT breakfast, the next morning, Esther was quiet and thoughtful ; she felt that she had something more to do in the world, than be dressed and receive company. The manners of some of the guests, the evening before, had led her into a train of reflection, in which she had long indulged before being summoned to breakfast. She met her father, fearfully, so to say, for there was a forbidding coolness in his bearing, though his lips breathed only tenderness. She looked upon the rich and showy furniture, the massive silver, and exquisitely painted china, and sighed ; for, though she admired their beauty, she felt that they brought in their train, domestics, style, fashion, all that tends to make a family cold and unsocial within itself, and she began to wish that her father was not so rich.

"Well, Esther," said her father, "what shall we do to amuse you to-day?"

"Whatever you please, father," replied she.

"My pleasure is to make you happy!" continued he. "And I should think a person of your age would form some schemes of sport. Will you—" Here he was interrupted by the announcement of his friend, Mr. Day.

"You have come just in time to decide an important question for us," said the count. "I was wishing to find something to make the day pass agreeably with Esther. She seems rather serious this morning. We must do something to cheer her up."

"I did not know that I was serious," interrupted Esther. "I was thinking whether it were necessary to live just as we do." Then, catching the eye of Mrs. Abel, she added, "It is so different from what I have been used to. I'm sure papa is very kind, and I thank him with all my heart."

"I presume last evening's party was hardly what you wish, my dear," said Mr. Day. "Yet, the company are highly gratified with your splen-

did entertainment; and, no doubt, M. Le Gendre, you will have plenty of callers," said he, significantly, to her father.

"We will set apart one day in the week for reception; what say you to that, my good child?"

"Certainly; I shall be happy to see some of the company."

"Then you have a preference?"

"O, yes! I saw two or three ladies with whom I should like to be acquainted, and one gentleman; the others talked so much, and so silly, that I could not bear them. I do like simple, natural people!"

"Did you find any with whose simplicity you were suited?" asked Mr. Day, carelessly.

"O, yes! There was one, I don't know his name, but he is your friend."

"My friend! How did you know that?"

"I understood it by your manner of taking him into the garden. Don't you remember, speaking to a gentleman who stood near you?"

"I have spoken to so many! Was he not middle-aged, and of common appearance?"

"Not at all," said Esther, with vivacity. "He was the most elegant man in the room!"

"Now I remember," said the deacon. "It was De Lacy, that young American, and a fine man he is, too. I have long known him, and shall be glad to have him make your father's acquaintance. He belongs to a rich family. He came to Europe for his health, and is now so deeply engaged in study and philanthropic pursuits, that he purposes to remain some time longer. I have never met a sounder youth. I suppose he said many learned things to you."

"Happily not," replied Esther; "for, if he had, I should not have been able to answer. On the contrary, he talked to me in the simplest manner, just like my good minister in the country, and I found words to answer him, which did not happen with any one else."

Just then, a domestic, who chanced to be in the room, turned and looked her in the face. Her father smiled; and his friend was evidently pleased.

"I have again spoken like a child; have I

not?" said Esther, looking confusedly at her father.

" You should be careful how you speak, in presence of strangers," replied he; " but before your father and our good friend you need feel under no restraint; speak openly, speak frankly. Tell us whom else you noticed last evening."

" Some very queer ladies. There was one, a lady from Washington,—that, I believe, is in America; she was almost too fleshy to move about, and wore such a quantity of ornaments, I could think of nothing but a story I once read. of an old lady, who used to put all the goods she had on her own back, to show them off, for sale. This lady came to me, and began to speak very bad French. I could not understand her, and then she brought a young man, her son, who seemed to have given the tailor and barber much trouble to try to make a man of him. You should have seen him bow and scrape. I could not help laughing, and, if it had not been for Mrs. Abel, I think I must have treated him rudely, I was so annoyed by his compliments. Then there was a very stiff lady: she seemed afraid to move. And another

lady looked so, I don't know how, at me, that I could not help shuddering."

"Was she a handsome woman, pale and sickly?" interrupted Mr. Day.

"Yes," said Esther.

"She is Sarah de Lacy, cousin of my friend," continued he. "An unfortunate woman, with much pride and ambition, and none of the Christian virtues which render woman lovely. But time is spending; if you will go with me, this morning, I think I can put you in the way of making yourself useful and happy."

"Thank you; if papa is willing, I shall be most happy to go," said Esther, in a lively tone.

"I will ring for the carriage," responded M. Le Gendre; "and Mrs. Abel will accompany you."

"Never mind a carriage, my friend; our limbs are better to us than horses," said the deacon, smiling.

"You, certainly, will not take Esther to any public place on foot —"

"Papa, please let us walk to-day. I should like it so much!" exclaimed Esther.

"Have your own way, child," responded the count, and left the room.

"I hope I have not made papa angry! I will run after him," and she opened his chamber door, gently. He was standing with his back against the wall, and his head sunk upon his bosom. "Father!" said a sweet voice. He looked up; moved towards her; stepped back; beckoned her to be gone, and closed the door after her.

She ran to her own chamber, where, meeting Mrs. Abel, she threw her arms about her neck, and exclaimed, "How shall I ever know how to please papa!"

Upon inquiry, she related all that had happened in the breakfast room, since Mrs. Abel left, and would have given way to a flood of tears, had not that good woman approved of all she had said and done. Then, preparing themselves to go with the deacon, they went to meet him.

With a smiling and cheerful expression, he said, "I hope, ladies, that we may all learn some good lessons, to-day, and promote not only our own happiness, but that of others. I wish to have

you make some calls, and not upon people who ride in their carriages."

After walking a few minutes, they turned into a side street, and, stopping at the door of a neat-looking house, Mr. Day took a key from his pocket, and ushered them in. A tall, genteel-looking woman, of about thirty-five, conducted them into a large and comfortable parlor. Mr. Day introduced the ladies as friends of the establishment, saying, "They would like to see the inmates." She led the way up stairs, and, opening the door of a large chamber, addressed herself to a sprightly old lady, who bustled round to get some chairs, and began to talk with great vivacity. "Lord bless you, Mrs. Gray ! Who is that beautiful young creetur' that you 're bringing here ? She looks just like a friend I had when I was young. You came across the water, did n't you, dear ? O ! O ! I see ; you 're born to trouble ; but you have the true heart ; you 'll outlive many sorrows, and, if you 're always good — you know what I mean by that — you 'll be happy ! "

" How you talk, Aunt Nannie ! What will the

ladies think of you?" said a prim old lady, who was knitting, with all her might.

Esther looked around. There were some five or six old ladies, busily employed. All looked contented but one, who, moping in a corner of the room, appeared unconscious of the presence of visitors. Mrs. Abel went to her, and kindly inquired after her health.

"Well enough," was the cool and crispy answer.

"Can I do anything for you?" continued Mrs. Abel.

"No, don't want nothing of nobody; only let me alone."

Meanwhile, Aunt Annie had completely monopolized the attention of Esther. She was showing her a large basket of colored rags, from which she contrived to make sundry black cats, with yellow eyes and red lips, and little braided mats; the ingenuity of which, pleased Esther very much. She was on the point of pulling out her purse to purchase, when a look from Mrs. Gray, informed her that it was injudicious.

"The lady would like one of your mats," said Mrs. G.

"Bless her heart : I 'm proud to give her the handsomest I have. Pray, choose, miss."

Miss Esther took a braided mat, with a stiff black cat in the centre, and thanked the old lady heartily.

Taking leave of these old ladies, they followed Mrs. Gray through several apartments, nicely furnished with white window-curtains and counterpanes, and such furniture as the necessity and convenience of old people require. Some rooms contained two, some three, persons, and in the upper story were small rooms for single individuals. All appeared satisfied, and all were occupied—some few in reading and writing. One had saved a quantity of newspaper scraps and poetry ; she expressed a great desire to have it printed ; said, "if she could raise one hundred francs to print a book, she should die happy." Esther would gladly have given them to her, but prudence restrained her. Poor Esther ! little did she then realize the worth of a hundred francs.

Passing by a small room, the door of which stood ajar, they heard a male voice in prayer. Esther's quick ear caught a familiar tone, but she

was not quite sure ; her heart beat quicker as she passed on.

The last old lady was entirely alone. Everything about her bore the air of former gentility. When they entered she was contemplating the miniature of a young man. She received them very courteously, and, in the course of conversation, expressed a wish that some one would read the Bible and other good books to her ; said that she had read so much as to impair her sight, and the spiritual food she received from books was more necessary to her comfort, now that her days were numbered, and she was soon to be in the spirit-land.

Just then, Mr. Day made his appearance at the door, and the good old lady welcomed him most cordially. After a few minutes' conversation, he opened the Bible, and read a portion in the Psalms. The old lady commenced singing a hymn, in which Mrs. Abel and Mr. Day joined. Esther was forcibly struck by the devotion of this person, and conceived a strong attachment for her, and desire to know her history. Taking their leave, they prepared to depart. Mrs. Gray apologized to Esther for the movement she had made

regarding the mat, saying, "It would have disturbed Aunt Annie much, as she thinks herself too well off to work for money."

Promising to come again soon, they left the house.

They were within a few steps of M. Le Gendre's, when a cry of "Help! help! Murder!" made Esther spring upon her feet. Mrs. Abel involuntarily shrieked, as a wretched girl, with streaming hair and tattered garments, threw herself into the deacon's arms, exclaiming, "O, save me! save me!" He had just thrust her into the door, when a ruffian dashed past him, muttering to himself, and swinging a huge club, with occasional oaths.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A THRILLING SCENE.

WHEN M. De Lacy arrived at his lodgings after the party, he found a little boy who had been waiting some time for him.

“If you please, sir,” said the child, “mother wishes you would come to her as soon as you can. She thinks little sissy is dying.”

“And who is your mother, my dear?”

“O, I don’t know, sir! My dear little sis! what shall I do if she dies?”

“Has she been sick long?”

“About a week, sir.”

“And how did you know anything about me?”

“Sissy has said so much about M. De Lacy, and we don’t know no other gentleman of that name. She says the angels are beckoning to her, and father is calling her, but she is not willing to go till you have prayed with her again.”

"I have prayed with her ! Who can it be ?" thought he.

'T was late, but he hesitated not to follow the child, who led him through many narrow streets, and finally into a court and up six flights of stairs. As they mounted the last steps, they heard a wailing cry, as of some one in distress.

"Poor grandmother!" said the boy ; and, hurrying forward, he cried out, "Mother, he 's here ! he 's come ! open the door !"

And the door was opened by a shadow of a woman, holding in her arms an infant.

"Is this M. De Lacy ?" said she. "God be praised that you have come in time to close the eyes of my darling !"

Another wail caused him to turn his head. An old woman, apparently a great sufferer, was lying on a heap of rags in a corner. The boy ran up to her, and tried to soothe her. "Dear grandmother, the good gentleman has come. Shall I hold your head that you may see him ?"

"This way, sir," said the anxious mother, fearing the breath of her child would be gone.

De Lacy approached, not a bed, but a board

extended across two barrels, and covered with rags. On it lay a sweet child, of about eight years. There was a heavenly expression on her countenance, as she extended her little, wasted hand to him, saying, "How kind you are to come! I did so wish to see you before I died! I hope you will take care of—" Here her voice faltered, and she lay perfectly still.

"O, she is going!" said her mother.

Presently the lips of the little one moved, but no sound could be heard.

"She wants you to pray, and grandmother wants you to pray," said the boy, eagerly.

And he did pray such a prayer as angels might have listened to. Reader, have you felt consoled by prayer? Do you know its soothing influence? If not, pray; pray with your whole soul; pray as did this good man, believing that a gracious God will lend a willing ear, and you, too, shall rejoice at the last hour, when the lamp of life is feebly flickering.

The child roused up as from a pleasant dream. "O, I am so happy!" said she. "Mother, you will never cry again because you have no bread

for us ; and bubbly will be so good, and love the kind gentleman. Grandmother is going with me, and we shall leave you to be happy. Dear M. Lacy, I am so thankful ! Yes, I come ! ” and she lay her little head upon his arm, and quietly yielded up her spirit to God who gave it.

M. De Lacy desired the mother to lie down with her infant, and take a little rest ; — but where was she to lie ? There was no bed ; so she sat in her chair, and, hushing her infant as she pressed it to her bosom, left him to take care of her dead. The boy could not be persuaded to leave his grandmother, and there he sat by her side, till her groans were lost in a heavy sleep ; then, rolling upon the floor, nature took her due, and he too slept.

When all was still, De Lacy took the dim lamp to get a nearer view of the dead child. He thought he had never seen anything so beautiful as that cold face. He had closed her eyes and stretched her little limbs. There was no nice, white robe to put on her, or white flowers to place in her little hands ; but she was beautiful as a

cherub. He thought and thought, but could not tell where he had seen her.

Everything in the room indicated the most abject poverty. His first impulse was to go out and bring in something to refresh those famishing bodies ; but a second thought was, to let the sleepers sleep, and take care for them in the morning.

We will leave him to provide a new home for the mother and children,— to place the grandmother among her aged sisters, where nurses and good attendance will be provided for her,— and go into the kitchen of M. Le Gendre.

## CHAPTER V.

### A KITCHEN SCENE.

“I HOPE you don’t think, M. Pierre, to dictate to me,” said Elise, the lady of the kitchen. “I’ve always had my own way in every good Catholic family where I lived. It’s none of your business what I give away.”

“I think it’s our business to take care of the property that’s entrusted to us; and, I say again, you have no right to give away all the food that’s left at every meal. If either of the ladies were to look after things, it would n’t be so,” replied Pierre.

“So you ’ll tattle, will you?” cried Jeannette, growing angry.

At this moment, Mrs. Abel and Esther opened the door.

“Upon my word, ladies,” said Jeannette, trying to cover up sundry bundles and packages which lay on the table; “I did n’t expect to see

the ladies in the kitchen, or I would have had all in order. 'T is very pleasant in our eating-room. Wouldn't you like to see some bouquets that were sent me last evening? — there they are."

"Presently," coolly replied Mrs. Abel, who was looking at the bundles. "What are in those packages?"

"Some things of mine, if you please," returned she, coloring.

"But I will take them out of our best napkins," continued Mrs. Abel, deliberately untying one, from which rolled out sundry bottles of wine. To the astonishment of Esther, she opened them all.

"Why did you say these things were yours?" asked Mrs. Abel.

"Well, whatever comes from the table is mine," stammered the girl.

"Do not add falsehood to theft, you wicked girl!" said Mrs. Abel. Then turning to Esther, who stood in mute astonishment, she asked whether it were best to dismiss Jeannette at once, so that her influence might not be exerted over the

other domestics, or to give her an opportunity to reform.

Jeannette looked imploringly at Pierre, who stepped forward, and, bowing respectfully, begged them to give his fellow-servant a trial of at least a week.

Esther advised the same ; and, thinking to favor the girl, said she would like to see the other room and the bouquets of which she spoke. Judge of her astonishment to see her own bouquet which she had passed to one of the ladies the evening of the party, with sundry flowers cut from her own pet bushes !

“How came you with my bouquet ?” asked she, quite excited.

“I was picked up in the entry, I assure you, mademoiselle,” was all the reply ; and Jeannette burst into tears.

“Unfortunate child !” said Mrs. Abel, compassionately, “thank God that we have discovered your wickedness before you are entirely lost !” and she and Esther withdrew.

“We must try to find some employment for the new comer, that will keep her out of the

kitchen," said Mrs. Abel; "and we shall have more than enough to do to look after so many servants. I wish your father would dismiss half of them; they are only in each other's way. But you would do well to advise with Mr. Day, before saying anything about it. We must not annoy with our plans."

Pierre was easily persuaded to keep this interview of Jeannette and her new mistress a secret, upon condition that she would never do the like again.

Hardly had they arranged matters satisfactorily, when the door flew open, and in ran Louise, the dressing-maid, followed by Christophe, the cook, laughing in a suppressed manner. As soon as the door was closed, they gave vent to their mirth, which attracted the attention of the other servants, who huddled round to know the cause.

"You would have died laughing," cried Louise, "to see the funny-looking girl I have had to dress, and the scolding I got from Marm Abel for laughing at her. Would you believe, she said she did n't know what to do with the hair-brush! I asked her where she came from, and she said

she did n't know. She don't seem to know anything. And, to cap all, she is to be Mrs. Abel's maid. Well, I'm rejoiced to get her off my hands; and now, if I don't make Miss Esther pony over some of her father's cash, I'm mistaken." Here she seized Christophe, and they whirled two or three times round the room.

" You should have heard Miss Esther herself this morning, if you 'd like to hear a simpleton," ejaculated Charlie. " Why, upon my word, she told her father, right before the deacon and I, that she was in love with that long-faced American, the one I told you about at breakfast,— who talked so saucy to a fine lady in the garden. I saw her brush the tears from her eyes, and if I had n't been a servant, I 'd sent him a challenge and made him sweat for it."

" Stop your bragging," cried Christophe, " and tell us what was the end of the story."

" 'Pon honor, she said she was in love with him. I could n't help just turning the corner of my eye round, to see if she blushed; and I s'pose she saw it, for she looked at her father, and he told her to be very careful how she spoke before

any of the other servants. ‘ You never need mind Charlie,’ said he ; ‘ you may trust in him as you would in the deacon. He never tells what he hears ; and he ’s as truthful as the sun.’ Halloo, what do you think of that, boys and girls ? ”

“ He don’t know you — don’t know you. Go on with your story,” exclaimed half a dozen voices at once.

“ Well, as I was saying,” continued Charlie, “ the deacon offered to take her to see the — the — what did he call him ? — O, the preacher ; and her father said Mrs. Abel must go too. And I believe he was horrid mad, for he ran right up stairs, — I stood behind the door to watch the play, — and Miss Esther ran after him. I thought he put her out of the room ; but all that did n’t prevent her going ; and they have brought home a rare specimen, I tell you. I motion that we take a vote not to have her in the kitchen.”

“ You need n’t trouble yourself,” said Pierre ; “ I think the ladies mean to keep her away from us.”

“ Huzza, huzza ! ” cried Christophe ; “ to-night we ’ll have our party, and a glorious one, too, if

you 'll all do your duty. Now I 'll tell what it is, our master is rich enough to make us all rich ; but as he won 't be likely to do that, I say let 's at least have a good time at his expense. If we are careful, they 'll never find it out. And as to the money I spend, — M. Le Gendre knows nothing about the price of things,— I can tell him I give more than I do, and all will be right. Now, if either of you brings us out, woe be to him ! ”

“ Come, Mistress Jeannette, hand over your keys ; we must crack a few bottles of wine to begin with,” cried Charlie.

“ That she shall not ! ” cried Pierre.

“ I should like to know where you got your authority ! I 'll let you know that I 'm master down stairs,” said Christophe, doubling his large, red fist.

“ Hands off ! ” cried the women ; “ don 't make a noise,— hush ! hush ! ”

The bell rang, and Charlie and Louise both ran. No sooner had they left, and silence was restored, than Pierre called their attention to a few words he wished to say.

“ Let 's know whether you 're Protestant or

Catholic, before you begin," cried Christophe, sneeringly.

"Well, you be quiet, Christophe, and let some one say something beside yourself," said Jeanette, seriously.

"At your service, madame," replied he, putting his finger upon his lips.

"I will not tax your patience further than to give you a maxim, or tell you a story," said Pierre; "which will you have?"

"Maxim short, and story long; maxim good for nothing, story good for something," said Christophe. "I like short, and I like good,—take both."

"The maxim is, that 'Honesty is the best policy.'"

"Old as your grandfather Methuselah," muttered Marie, who had hoped to hear something new. "Now for the story; and make it short, for my work is waiting for me."

"A very rich gentleman," said he, "was in a small out-house, one cold night, very late, when he heard the crackling of the ice, and a light脚步声. He looked through a small window,

and saw a woman, whom he recognized in the moonshine to be a poor neighbor. She approached his wood-pile and took thence a stick, then replaced it. She looked up, and shuddered. He stood breathless. Again she took the stick,—again she put it back, saying, 'O God ! must I, can I steal ? O, my poor, freezing children !' and, wringing her hands, she turned away. Little did she think that any eye saw, or ear heard her, but God's."

"What's the end of the story ?" interrupted Christophe.

"Why, that the gentleman took care of and supported her and her family the rest of their lives," said Pierre. "Now I'm determined to be honest, and if I can't make the rest of you so, I 'll leave the house."

"Good-by," retorted Christophe ; and after Pierre had left the kitchen, he said to Jeannette, "'T won't do to have our jollification to-night. I'm sorry I told my plans so freely,—I'm afraid of that fellow. Is he a Protestant ? All the folks up stairs are ; and I assure you there 's no sin in getting all we can out of the heretics. If they

belonged to the true church, as we do, 't would be quite another story. I'll take money to church every Sunday, and save my soul."

In about a quarter of an hour, he went out, saying that he was going to see his father, and should not return till late at night.

Poor Christophe! he had never known what it was to have a kind father and a good home. One of twelve children of poor parents, he was early thrust from the paternal roof, to seek his fortune. After wandering about from place to place, and doing jobs for one and another, he found a distant relation of his mother's, who offered to give him a home. This man was a barber, and a bigoted Catholic. He obliged Christophe to attend to all the forms of the church, little heeding the culture of his heart. He taught him his trade, but no morality. He fed his body to excess, and starved his mind. After a time, Christophe, growing tired of this, connected himself with a band of strolling players, and, supplying himself from his uncle's money-drawer, ran away. In the capacity of player, it was necessary for him to learn to read; which he

did with great facility. Here he would have done well, so far as making money is well, had he not been too presuming. In less than a year he quarrelled with some of his companions, who, uniting, gave him a sound drubbing, took all his money, and left him to look out for himself.

The situation of waiter in a restaurator in Paris presented itself, and Christophe flourished for a time in this capacity. Here his appetite led him to look into the mysteries of the culinary art, and, in process of time, he was able to take the place of cook when circumstances required. Here also he became acquainted with Louise, a maid in the establishment, and, under promise of marriage, he induced her to give herself up to and go with him.

The name and wealth of M. Le Gendre bore a prospect of making an easy fortune, or at least leading a joyous life to both, and they were glad enough to enter into his service.

Louise, as usual, sat up for him that night. He returned late, — was intoxicated and abusive ; and she went to bed with sad thoughts and gloomy forebodings. Sleep relieved and fancy amused

her. She thought she had broken off all connection with her former lover, and was the wife of a pious young man; that he showed her a neat little cottage, garden, fruit-trees and vines, and told her that these were for her. Everything looked smiling and bright around the place, and she longed to take up her abode there, but a strange something held her back. Struggling to be free, she awoke, long after her mistress was up and dressed.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

"My dear Esther! Why do you sit up so late?" said Mrs. Abel, as she glanced into the young lady's chamber at midnight.

"O, I am so happy!" replied Esther. "Too happy to sleep! Nor did I think it was very late. Since you left the parlor, I have read to father, and he has talked to me. He was as kind as any one could be; and, I hope, I believe, he felt happy. He called me his darling, and kissed me, over and over again. If I can make him happy, what more shall I desire? I wish you could see how beautiful he is when his face is lighted up by a pleasant smile! I told him that this evening, spent with him, was a thousand times more agreeable to me than society. He seemed pleased, and promised to give me an account of his travels; says he has been all over the world, and seen and suffered much. I have been so

taken up with him, that I forgot the old ladies, and everything, until I came into the chamber and saw this funny-looking mat. O, I have lived long to-day ! Do sit down, and talk with me ! I have so many, many things to ask you ! ”

“ ’T were better to go to bed now, my dear. It is bad for your health to be up so late several nights in succession,” said Mrs. Abel.

Esther warmly embraced her, and, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, soon retired. Mrs. Abel saw the necessity of a well-ordered household. She felt that she was responsible, in a measure, for the welfare of that company of domestics under her ; that their end and aim would be to get all they could from the rich man, who had commenced housekeeping on a very extravagant scale, and thrown them into temptation. She was very suspicious of Christophe, from some conversation she had overheard ; and when she found Louise neglect her duties, to remain in the kitchen, she resolved to sit up, and try to find out what was going on. She heard the drunken voice of the brute, and the sobs and tears of the un-

happy Louise. But she thought best to wait for the morrow.

How apt we are to look forward for a to-morrow that shall carry out some favorite scheme, or complete a task for us; without reflecting that to-morrow will bring us new duties, which will require all our energies, and new tasks, which, seen from a human point of view, appear too mighty for our little strength!

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Kate was, as Charlie said, a rare specimen. She slept till after all had done breakfast, then bounded out of bed, and down stairs, in her night-dress, running from one room to another, and opening every door in her way. It was with some difficulty that Mrs. Abel could get her to dress herself in a proper manner. Then, wishing to make some arrangements with Esther, she desired Marie to attend to Kate's breakfast. Accordingly, she brought coffee, rolls, and toast, and, placing them on the table, went about her work in another apartment.

Presently a scream, as of one in distress, attracted several members of the family to Kate's

room. A convulsive laugh from Charlie was followed by a roar from the whole party. Even the gravity of Mrs. Abel herself was not equal to the occasion. There was Kate, in the middle of the floor, jumping up and down, with arms flying, like a dancing-jack; her mouth stretched to its utmost width, and streams of coffee flowing from thence to the bottom of her clean frock; the coffee-pot was lying at her feet, and its hot contents, running in every direction, bore the melting butter from the overturned table in its course. Broken china, sugar, cream, and rolls, were scattered in every direction,

“Poor thing! She is terribly burned,” said Esther.

“Good enough for her!” exclaimed Marie, vexed at the sight of so much extra work for her to do.

“How could she have done it?” inquired Mrs. Abel.

“I believe, madam,” said Charlie, “that she filled her mouth from the coffee-pot, and turned over the table as she jumped up.”

“Run for the doctor, Charlie!” said M. Le Gendre, who had just come to the scene of action.

“What in the world is all this? Whoever saw such a sight? The child is sadly burned.”

The doctor came, and with much difficulty, and by dint of scolding, succeeded in applying the necessary remedies. Louise, the gay, thoughtless Louise, to the astonishment of all the house, volunteered to take charge of her. Mrs. Abel approved of the proposal. She wished to have Louise near her; to learn more of her character; to break up the connection between her and Christophe, if possible; and, by persuasion and kindness, to form habits of industry and order, which would, hereafter, essentially contribute to her welfare and happiness.

Dinner-time came, and both Mrs. Abel and Esther welcomed the arrival of Mr. Day. They could get nothing from Kate, respecting herself. To all their questions, excepting that her name was Kate, she had invariably answered, “Don’t know.” And, having heard that their friend attended courts, etc., they hoped that he might have obtained some information of her persecutor. But not so. Mr. Day had been called away, to assist M. De Lacy in the care of a dying person,

and had almost forgotten Kate. He had been among the wicked, wretched and miserable, so much, that the sight of a man chasing a girl, with a club in his hand, made less impression on his mind, than upon that of such persons as his female friends. Yet he was all kindness, and when they told him how seriously she was burned, he pitied her very much.

“But what do you think of a girl of her age not knowing how to use her cup?” asked Esther.

“I am not surprised,” replied he. “I have been in a small room, where two or three families were huddled together, without furniture of any kind. I have seen the sick and dying, on a heap of rags, in a corner; and, when I have asked for water to cool their parched lips, have had it handed me in a broken bottle. No doubt this girl is of some of these most abject ones in the city; and, ladies, if you have patience to teach and make something of her, you will do more good than you can possibly conceive of.”

“But will not her parents claim and take her from us?” asked Mrs. Abel.

“I think not,” answered he. “These people

are so poor, that to be freed from a child is a matter of rejoicing. And, perhaps, poor Kate has no parents living, or that her life was in jeopardy. No doubt she will, by and by, give some account of herself."

"Apropos," said M. Le Gendre, "can you find us a good coachman?"

"Papa, if you please," interrupted Esther, "we have too many servants in the house now."

"That is laughable," rejoined her father, "What do you know of housekeeping in so short a time? Have you been into the kitchen yet?"

"O, yes, sir!" responded she. "And from what I saw there, and have heard from Louise, I should think they had not work enough to make them industrious. You know, papa," added she, looking affectionately at him, "that we are not to have much company, and that Mrs. Abel and I need some employment. I wish to be your maid."

"Good child," ejaculated he, "you are too thoughtful for one of your years." Then, turning to Mrs. Abel, he asked her, what she thought of the number of domestics.

"I think we have, at least, two too many," replied she.

"Is it possible, with such an establishment as ours?" continued he, with surprise. "Well, decide who shall go, and I will dismiss them after a reasonable time."

This was a difficult point to both the ladies. The good ones they, of course, wished to retain, and they hoped to improve the bad. So they could not decide, and Mr. Day advised that they should keep them all for the present, and try to find sufficient for them to do. "Let the men do more of the women's work, and let the women sew."

"For whom shall they sew?" asked Esther. "We are all well stocked with clothes."

"And do you suppose that all the people in this great city have clothes enough, my daughter?" asked M. Le Gendre.

"O, they shall work for the poor!" said Esther, her face lighting up with pleasure. "I shall like that much!"

"Don't make our house an industrial establish-

ment," said M. Le Gendre. "I don't want poor folks round the doors."

Thus they conversed, and the remainder of the day passed quietly and pleasantly away. That night the whole family retired early, and sweet sleep and pleasant dreams rejoiced the heart of the happy Esther.

After her morning devotions, she sat down to arrange in her mind the business of the day. She looked back upon her country life, and remembered how much work Mrs. Porter accomplished in a few short hours, and with how little bustle. She remembered, too, that that good woman used to say to her, "Esther, if you expect to accomplish much in one day, you must have a system. Arrange your work, as far as you can, in your chamber; then be industrious and persevering, and all will come out right."

"Yes," said she, to herself; "I have much to do, and, God helping me, I will do it. I shall do everything I can for papa myself; that will bring me in contact with Charlie, and perhaps I shall have something to do for his good. Then those old ladies; I must go and read to them. I am

so happy that I can be useful! 'T is nice to have money enough, too, for all we need, and papa is very generous. I must buy something for Aunt Nannie!" Saying this, she cast her eyes upon the stiff black cat on the little mat, whose great white eyes seemed to be winking in the bright morning sun. Just at this moment, Louise entered, and apologized for being tardy again.

"O, my dear Miss Esther, how happy you look!" said she, and burst into tears.

"Louise, my good girl, I trust you are not unhappy on that account," replied Esther. "Why should I not be happy? Have I not every blessing—kind friends, good health, and all these sweet smiling flowers around me? Surely, you will thank God, with me, for all his mercies."

"O, Miss Esther, you are good, and ought to be happy! And I am wicked, and—"

"Are you wicked? Poor girl, how much I pity you! What can I do to make you good and happy, too?"

Here Louise, deeply affected by the earnest tone of Esther's voice, opened her heart freely; confessed her wicked intention of trying to steal

from her, and begged her help in freeing herself from the tyranny of Christophe.

Esther sympathized deeply with the heart-stricken girl; and, as was her usual custom in trying cases, had recourse to Him, who makes the simple wise. After a few moments' silence, as if struck by a happy thought, she proposed to ask Mr. Day to find a place for Christophe out of their family, and look after him; to which Louise thankfully acceded.

Esther's cheerful and happy face elicited smiles even from her sad and stern parent; and, before the reception day came round, she had won the hearts of nearly all the domestics. Charlie declared that she really knew much more than he thought she did, and that she was a first-rate mistress.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ENCHANTMENT OF BENEVOLENCE.

“WHY were you not at M. Le Gendre’s yesterday ?” said Deacon Day to his friend De Lacy.

“I can hardly tell,” replied the latter, “unless the fear of meeting my cousin prevented me.”

“What is there about her that you dislike ?” inquired Mr. Day. “She is very handsome, appears talented, and, as far as I can judge, is what the world calls a fine woman.”

“You should know her well to judge of her character. I believe her capable of doing almost anything, to answer her own purpose. Unfortunately for me,—for both of us, I may say,—our parents, who are wealthy planters, and whose estates join, had determined to unite us; and my father made it his dying request. I could not promise to comply, for I never loved her. My

mother was disappointed, but did not blame me. It is true that I came to this country for my health ; but not wholly for that. I never dreamed that she would follow me ;— indeed, I hoped absence would wean her affections. As for myself, I resolved to labor for my fellow-creatures, and yield a willing sacrifice to the Lord's service, and think I could be happy in my calling if Sarah were not a shadow in my path. 'T is a painful thing to be so beloved without being able to reciprocate."

"My dear, young friend," said the deacon, "you make too serious a matter of it. All you have to do is, to tell the lady that you never can marry her ; or, if you meet with the right person, tell her that."

"You are very much mistaken, my good sir," replied De Lacy, mournfully. "She is passionate and jealous. God knows my heart ; how much I pity her, and how seriously I have talked and reasoned with her. I could do anything for her happiness but marry her. I have even offered to give up all claim to the estate of our aunt, which is to be divided between us, but she will not hear

a word of it. If I go to church, to prayer-meeting, to a friend's house, invited or uninvited, she is sure to be there. I have been so much annoyed by her that I have several times determined to leave Paris."

"That you must not till you have seen Esther Le Gendre once more," said the deacon.

"If I see her often I fear I shall be tempted to stay. She seemed to realize my idea of a woman," responded De Lacy, with more animation.

"What is your idea of a woman? We give the term woman to females in general, but you seem to make a distinction. Come, enlighten me a little," said the deacon.

"By a true woman," answered the young man, "I mean, neither the doll, who is dressed for show, and good for nothing else; nor the heartless, headless indolent, who sits the live-long day doing nothing, like my Cousin Sarah; nor the busy, driving bustler, who carries news from house to house; but I mean—O, deacon, you laugh!—you know what I mean,—a substantial, common-sense person, who has a purpose in life;

to whom the whole world are brothers and sisters, and who fears not to do her duty, let it be what it may. In short, I mean one who knows the worth of her soul and her life."

"Come, will you meet me at M. Le Gendre's to-morrow morning after breakfast?" interrupted the deacon. "I shall expect you;" and, with one of his peculiar smiles, he turned away.

"Well, that is odd enough, to cut the conversation so short," said De Lacy to himself; and directed his steps to the sick old grandmother, whom he had left the evening before. When he arrived, the matron gave him a hearty welcome, saying,

"You have come in time to receive her blessing before she dies. And she is so happy, 't will do you good, as I am sure it will all of us."

It was, indeed, a happy scene. The daughter and son were kneeling at the bed-side, while the old lady, seemingly held communion with the blessed messengers who were about to take her spirit to its heavenly home. There were no lamentations; and the few tears that were shed were tears of joy that her prayer to depart was so soon

answered. Her death seemed to have a soothing influence on the other old ladies of the establishment; even the morose Madam Fievre voluntarily united in prayer with the family, and spoke kindly to the boy.

A messenger from Sarah informed M. De Lacy that she was very ill, and requested to see him. Accordingly, he went and found her dangerously sick of fever, and more impatient than he had ever seen her. She thought the climate uncongenial, and tried to persuade him to travel through Italy with her when she was able; which he kindly declined to do. When she questioned him concerning his duties, and ascertained that he considered them with the poor and wretched, she became almost angry, and declared herself disgraced by such a relative, and that, instead of going to Italy, she would return home. She also charged her illness upon his unkind treatment, and placed on him the responsibility of whatever might happen to her.

M. De Lacy tried to reason with her, but in vain; she was incorrigible and almost abusive. He pitied her; and being glad to have her return

to America, he would have assisted her willingly, — the more so, as her health was so feeble, — but she refused his offer, and he left her deeply excited.

He also passed a sleepless night. The idea of being the involuntary cause of suffering to a fellow-creature was painful to his tender heart. But what could he do? He examined himself carefully, yet conscience accused him of nothing, and he resolved to leave all to the guidance of a kind Providence.

At ten o'clock the next morning he found himself before the door of M. Le Gendre, and was deliberating whether to ring or not, when a wild laugh, and a shower of cold water from a window above, roused him from his reverie. At this moment Charlie opened the door, and he entered. After wiping and brushing, he was ushered into the breakfast room, where were M. Le Gendre, the deacon, Mrs. Abel and Esther. They expressed great pleasure in seeing him, and in a few moments he felt as if among dear friends. Mr. Day had told him so much about Kate, that he

naturally felt indebted to her for the shower, and wished to see her.

Mrs. Abel led the way up stairs, and Kate was found before the mirror in Esther's room, trying on a silk dress which she had taken from the wardrobe, her long hair hanging over her shoulders dripping with water.

"How came you in this room, with Miss Esther's dress on?" said the good woman.

A loud laugh was the only response.

"Do you know me, Kate?" said De Lacy.

She nodded in the affirmative.

"Where have you seen me?" asked he.

And to this and other questions she only gave the usual — "Don't know."

The deacon was anxious to hear what M. De Lacy thought of Kate.

"It seems to me that she is either non compos, or very cunning; 't will be difficult to tell which, for some time. I should judge that it would be best to try to keep her employed. She must be active to go about on those lame feet. Have you set about teaching her anything?" said he, turning to Esther.

"We have tried to get her to sew," replied she, "but thus far without success. It seems impossible to fix her attention; and, if we do place the needle between her fingers, she almost invariably sticks it where she ought not. She has already spoiled many things for us, besides hurting Louise badly."

"Poor Louise!" said Mrs. Abel; "her patience is sadly tried, and she is doing admirably. I am very glad that she is in our company so much of her time."

"And so am I," said Esther. "I find her always kind and pleasant. Perhaps M. De Lacy can put us in the way of teaching Kate something that will occupy her attention, and make her less troublesome."

"It strikes me that music might have a soothing influence on her," rejoined De Lacy. "I have often tried it with good success; and, if you like, I will bring a music-box with me the next time I come, and we will see how it will affect her."

"No doubt it will seem strange to you that Esther has not learned music. Indeed, I begin

to feel almost sorry, that I have kept her so secluded. I find I have lost many years that I might have enjoyed with her," said M. Le Gendre, thoughtfully.

"Never mind, dear father," exclaimed Esther; "we shall enjoy it all the more, now that we are together. And cannot you yourself teach me music?"

"I think not, my child," answered the father, as a shade came over his face, the index of a sad thought which troubled him.

The deacon saw it, and, turning to De Lacy, said, in a half-serious manner, "You are a fine pianist, why not turn teacher?"

"I will most thankfully do whatever I can to serve your friend," was the reply. And he arose to take his leave.

"Come again very soon," said M. Le Gendre. "I am sure the ladies will be impatient to test your music upon Kate. Your stay is much too short."

After he had retired, the deacon amused the company with accounts of De Lacy's benevolence. When he spoke of the old ladies, Esther wished to

know more of Aunt Nannie and the one who had recently died.

Mrs. Abel wished to know something of the one who desired to be left to herself, and the pious old lady whose eyes prevented her reading.

“I learned from one of her relations,” said Mr. Day, “that the old lady, whom you rightly call pious, was once a very wicked woman; and that a son-in-law was instrumental in her conversion. It appears that she married a widower in comfortable circumstances, — rendered him unhappy, and abused his only child; that a series of misfortunes made her dependent on this son, who proved to be a superior person, and succeeded in bringing her to a full sense of her errors. They lived very happily together till separated by death. To look at his miniature, and talk of his virtues, are her most pleasant occupations. I should have said that she is in the Home from choice, having a sufficiency for her few wants while she lives, which cannot be long.”

“Why,” interrupted Esther; “she looks pretty well.”

“A tumor, my dear,” replied he, “warns her

that her end is approaching ; and, glad am I to say, that she looks forward with pleasure to the time when she shall be no more in the world."

"Is that what you call a Christian spirit ?" asked M. Le Gendre.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Day. "She is willing to live God's time ; yet, happy to go when he calls. She often says she has been thrice warned,—by an accident which deprived her of a limb ; by the death of her darling ; and by this tumor, which, gnawing at her heart-strings, seems to say, 'be ready.' Had she the health or power to be useful to her fellow-creatures, I doubt not but that she would pray to be spared a little longer."

"I do not understand how people can be so ready and willing to die, unless under some excitement," continued M. Le Gendre. "I have known men offer to do and to be anything, if so their life might be spared. And, in a violent storm, I have seen the most hardened and abandoned throw themselves on their knees and pray such prayers as would make your ears tingle. But it was the fear of death that moved their

strong and stubborn souls, for they always prayed for life."

"True, my good friend," said Mr. Day; "but these are not our examples. Those who are happy in the thought of death are usually those who look beyond the limits of time. They live not for themselves alone, but for others. Their lives are earnest, for they have an object in view, and that object is the service of their Father in heaven. O, M. Le Gendre, could you have seen the strong faith of the tender child, whose life had been bright as a summer's day, you, too, would say there is a something pleasant in death! I can never forget how my sister called us all around her bedside, and bade us farewell, with a face lightened up by the hope of glory. 'I shall be *so happy!*' said she. 'Come soon and meet me!' Not a tear was shed at that death-bed. And no doubt the angels in heaven rejoiced that another member was added to their company. God help us all to be like her."

The tears coursed down the cheeks of the strong man, as he thought of his angel sister,

and all were silent for a few moments, when he continued :

“ Of Aunt Nannie little is known. It is thought, from what she says of herself, that she ran away from a bad husband, in some distant country, and that distress and poverty have made her crazy enough to forget her troubles, and be happy where she is. This seems to me a kindness of Providence, and I am glad that she is as she is, under the circumstances.

“ Of the woman with whom M. De Lacy was at prayer the day you visited the house, the bright little boy, who comes for needle-work for his mother, will tell you ; for she was his grandmother. That poor creature, Madame Le Fievre, who is so gruff with every one, was left a widow, residing in a country villa, in the midst of ease and plenty. She was avaricious. Money-getting seemed her end and aim ; her whole study being to increase her store of worldly goods. For years after her husband’s death, she was not known to give the least article to relieve the wants of the poor. But a heavy judgment awaited her. She had sent away the last domestic, and was alone in

the house. It was a clear summer day, and she picked up some sticks as she walked through her garden, and kindled a little fire to prepare her solitary repast. In a few moments her dwelling was enveloped in flames ; and before assistance could be rendered she had lost her all. The money she had dared to trust in business soon failed, and she saw herself reduced to penury. For years she has lived on, earning a scanty pittance, till ill health has, at length, driven her to the house provided for her sisters in poverty. We hope that time will soften her disposition, and help her discover her true character."

"I must say that I am quite interested in this old ladies' concern," said M. Le Gendre. "Is there anything provided for old gents?"

"Nothing particular ; or nothing upon this plan, I should say," replied the deacon. "I think our establishment is unique in its kind ; it gives the inmates a comfortable and good home, while it carefully maintains the individuality of each. Talk with them, and you will find each feels herself entirely her own mistress. M. De Lacy is very indulgent. He says old people must

not be interfered with, nor yet deprived of anything to which they have been accustomed. The matron was, at one time, much annoyed by an old lady's smoking, and thought to coax her to leave it off. 'I would not,' said De Lacy; 't is more comfort to her than harm to any one else. We will break up every bad habit in the young, but not trouble the old.' "

"I like the plan, deacon," exclaimed M. Le Gendre; "and, if you will take the trouble of starting a similar establishment for males, I will furnish means."

"Good ! thank God !" said the deacon; "my prayers are answered. Such a thing is greatly needed, and you will yourself derive benefit from so worthy an enterprise."

In the evening a small music-box came, with a note from De Lacy, directed to Mrs. Abel. The note stated that the indisposition of and preparation for the departure of his cousin for America, would occupy him for some days; after which, he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing M. Le Gendre and Miss Esther, to whom he sent compliments.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOME TRIALS.

AMONG the few persons, selected as visitors to Esther, were a Mr. and Mrs. Tincum, of New York. They were polite, well-educated people, and she became quite attached to the lady; and, during their short stay in Paris, entertained them with great hospitality.

By some unaccountable mismanagement on the part of Mr. T.'s agent, he found himself short of funds, and M. Le Gendre was happy to accommodate him. They left with promises of letter-writing, payments, and every demonstration of affection. During the six weeks which followed their departure, everything went smoothly on. M. Le Gendre spent the greater part of his time with his daughter; she administered to his wants bodily and spiritually; and, under her gentle influence, he became calm, and comparatively cheerful. He instructed her in mathematics, geography, and

natural science, in all of which she made slow, but sure, progress.

Mrs. Abel managed the domestic concerns admirably, and found in Esther a very apt and able assistant. Louise manifested much good feeling and thankfulness for the care bestowed upon her. All appeared well with the other domestics, as far as the good woman could see. Pierre was faithful, and she felt that she could confide in him. Upon Kate, the music-box operated almost as the harp of David upon Saul; when in a tantrum, 'twas sure to quiet her. One day, Esther gave her permission to water and pick the dead leaves from her plants.

"What are you doing, child?" cried Louise, who came just in time to prevent her clipping off the roots of a fine passion-flower, which Esther highly prized.

"O, I shall turn it upside-down; that's the quickest way to get dead leaves off!" replied she. "See what I have in this box!" and she showed her a large box filled with the buds of the flowers.

"Dear Miss Esther, how badly she will feel!"

How could she have set you about such work?" said Louise, mournfully.

Kate refused to give up the scissors, and Mrs. Abel came in just in time to prevent Louise having a hearty box on the ear.

The deacon made them his daily visits as usual, but De Lacy came not.

Esther would have been glad to see him, but her time was too fully occupied, and she was too little acquainted with him to miss his company.

The more the deacon and Mrs. Abel saw each other, the more necessary it appeared to be for them to see each other; and, in the course of the summer, Mr. Day discovered that a woman was very necessary for a man's happiness, and that, with such an one as Mrs. Abel, he could be far more useful.

Mrs. Abel had little objection to matrimony, and still less to the deacon, whose character she had learned to appreciate. But how was she to leave Esther? That would not do, as she had promised to stay with her as long as she lived.

"But," said the deacon, "when you made that promise you did not know the influence she would

gain over her father; nor could you anticipate so rapid a maturity on her part."

A few weeks' reflection, together with the urgent request of both M. Le Gendre and his daughter, decided Mrs. Abel; and she was privately married, and brought the deacon to her happy home. I say happy, because I believe that home must be happy, the inmates of which are employed in blessing their fellow-creatures.

Esther frequently spoke of taking lessons in music; but Mr. Day, who was anxious to bring about a closer acquaintance between her and his friend, De Lacy, proposed her waiting the return of the latter from Germany, whither he had gone, for a short time, on a scientific investigation.

As we pass the splendid mansions of the rich, and see their fine carriages, and liveried servants, we are apt to sigh for the wealth which might bring them happiness if rightly employed. But, alas! how little do we know of the splendid misery within! There are fond parents bereft of all inheritors but one, and he a fool. What are those lace curtains, and costly carpeting, to that mother? Will the golden cup, from which her

only child drinks, reflect light to his dull brain ? She groans in spirit, as she looks from her carriage-windows, at the lively, skilful, peasant's child, and says, "Happy is the woman, whom that little one calls mother !" But she never thinks to take to her heart some needy orphan, who might grow up to bless and cheer her declining days ; and so she drags through life, a rich lady, whom the glorious sun of charity never warmed ; for, too closely wrapped in silks and jewels, he may not enter there, but is reflected thence to some such persons as the Le Gendres.

We hear them spoken of, according to the light of the individuals, thus :

*Mr. Prang.* "I wish we could get something out of that rich old fellow that lives in the best house I ever saw. You know who I mean. What 's his name ? "

*Mr. Spathe.* "You mean Le Gendre. He 's not old, but rich enough and stingy enough, I tell you ! Why, he 'd no more lend a hand to help us in getting up this procession, than he 'd give us his money-bags."

*Mr. P.* "Do you know how he lives, shut up there in that castle of a place?"

*Mr. S.* "My wife says, that he keeps himself in his chamber nearly all the time; that that poor child of his is never allowed to go anywhere, or see anybody; and that he has a woman to watch her, and take care of her. He's so stingy, that he allows no company, if he can help it, to avoid the expense."

*Mr. P.* "How, then, came he to give that large party, a while ago?"

*Mr. S.* "They say he did that to show folks how rich he is, and that the cost of it makes him so careful now. Why, I really believe they live as meanly as they can; and, as to society, what little they do have seems to be the lowest class of people, for *they* go there sometimes, and remain for hours."

*Mr. P.* "Well, if that is n't odd enough! His money won't do much good in the world, while he lives, I'm sure. I wish I had it; I'd circulate it."

*Dr. Jordan.* "My good woman, what kind

friend has Providence raised up for you, since I was here? You really look quite comfortable."

*Mrs. Bugard.* "A kind friend, indeed, sir; an angel I may say, — Miss Le Gendre. She has been to see me, and done several things for me with her own dear hands. I never thought that such a lady could take hold and work; and, then, she has sent me everything, and a nice young woman to wait upon me. God bless her! I have been so thankful, and prayed, if it be the Lord's will, that I may live to do for others as I have been done by."

*Dr. J.* "They are good people, indeed. I always hear from them among the poor whom I visit. I believe they spend their time and fortune for the needy and destitute; and they are such pious people, sincere Christians. God be praised that a few good still live among the wicked!"

One morning, Esther observed that her father ate nothing at breakfast, and was unusually quiet. She had once or twice spoken to him, and received no answer. But, as that was often the case, she thought nothing of it at first. After a while, his countenance changed, and she became alarmed.

Mr. and Mrs. Day were summoned, who saw that he was in a fit. Medical assistance was called in, and, upon examination, it was found that his heart was much diseased.

Esther was wholly unprepared for sickness, her heart being filled with pleasant schemes, and joyful anticipations. She had seen her father comparatively happy, and was looking forward to the time when his affections and hopes should extend beyond this mundane sphere, and he, enjoying "that peace which the world cannot give," should partake of the pleasures of herself and friends.

A protracted and distressing illness followed this first attack. Week after week did the affectionate child watch at the bed-side of her only parent, rendered doubly dear by suffering and dependence on her sympathies. If she turned away, his eyes followed her; if out of sight, he would ask for her; did she retire to her own room, for prayer and a little sleep, he could not rest.

Mrs. Day was anxious for the health of her darling, and would often try to get her away from the sick-chamber. M. De Lacy frequently called, and made himself very useful. Esther found in

him a kind and tender brother, and the more she saw of him, the more did she liken him to her good minister in the country. Though this long sickness brought many duties, and occupied much time and thought, in this limited circle of philanthropists, yet the charities failed not; the poor and sick were not neglected, and none came to the house unnoticed and uncared for.

“There is time enough to do all that is necessary to be done,” Mr. Day would say. “We will not call upon strangers for that which we can better do ourselves.”

Time passed rapidly on, and M. Le Gendre’s health began to improve. It was thought that Esther needed recreation, as well as occupation, to take her from the sick-chamber; and she commenced her music under the instruction of M. De Lacy. Pupil and teacher could not be better satisfied with each other. He had never given a music lesson in earnest before; consequently, she became the best scholar he ever had. He was her first master, and, of course, she never knew his equal. O, those were charming lessons, in which soul spoke to soul! Music was not alone their

theme. The beautiful in nature ; the goodness and wisdom of God, the glories of another world, the sympathies of human hearts, were all talked over.

“Can you give me any particulars of De Lacy’s family ?” said M. Le Gendre to Mr. Day, one morning, after Esther had left the room.

“They are, as I am told, of the moneyed aristocracy in one of the Southern States of America ; Virginia, I believe.”

“And does he intend to return there to live ?”

“O, no ! His father was a planter, and his mother still holds slaves, which causes him much grief. He tried all he could to persuade his father to free them, his cousin told me. He abhors the system of slavery, and thinks it will bring some great curse upon that, so called, free country. He is right. It is a shame to America that she holds God’s free-born creatures in bondage. Why do not the high-minded population of the United States raise their voices against a government which tolerates so much injustice ?”

“They say, and perhaps they think, they can

do nothing, at present, and many hope that the system will wear out of itself."

"Never, while money is the end and object of man. I tell you, friend Day, they can help it if they will. Let every black child, born in the United States, be a free citizen, and entitled to all the privileges of the whites, then will a few years show us a better state of things. You little know how deeply I suffer, when I think of the buffetings and scourgings of Africa's poor children." There was a long pause; then he continued, "I wish De Lacy were anything but a planter's son."

"Why so? Is he not good in every sense of the word?"

"Very, very good! But I think he is gaining on Esther's affections. I notice that she is anxious about the time of his coming, and sad if he chances not to come. O, my child! My Esther! I would willingly give you to such a man, but—" but, here the tears choked his utterance.

"You trouble yourself with some misgivings, my friend. De Lacy adores your child, as much as a consistent Christian can adore a mortal being;

but he has never lisped his love to her. Let me but tell him that you approve, and all will be according to your wishes. France will, henceforth, be his fatherland, if Esther so desires."

"Tell him what you will, and now leave me to myself awhile."

## CHAPTER IX.

### VISIT TO AMERICA.

THE deacon was overjoyed to talk with the young man upon a subject so dear to his own heart. De Lacy, in his quiet way, raised his eyes to heaven, and, with an outpouring of gratitude, whispered his thanks, and prayed that he might be a worthy recipient of so great a treasure. "Mr. Day," said he, "I am overpowered. I could not, dared not, expect such a blessing."

Mrs. Day related all that had passed to Esther ; she was astonished ; the idea of matrimony had never entered her head ; she felt that she was to live for her father. De Lacy she respected, and his company was dear to her, but, for the present, her father was her all.

About a week after this conversation, Esther received the following letter :

“MY DEAR ESTHER: It grieves me to tell you that I must absent myself from you some time,—to me a very long time, however short it may be.

“A letter from home informs me that my mother is dangerously sick; her business deranged, and the plantation managed by a brutal overseer.

“My aunt urges my immediate return; and, dear friend, I must go where duty so imperatively calls. O, that I may be able to liberate all the slaves on our plantation! This is my urgent desire; but if I do this, and become a poor man, comparatively, will your father change his sentiments toward me? I know that he is generous and noble; yet a fear lingers in my breast. I feel that it would seem hard to him to give his only child to a man whose character would be his only fortune.

“May I hope that you will yet be mine, if the Lord will? Give me this assurance, and I shall go on my way rejoicing; for your spirit will be ever present to bless and cheer me.

“I have determined to go immediately, and

dare not see you again ; I could not bear a leave-taking.

“ My best remembrances to your father ; tell him how grateful I am for all his kindness towards me. God bless you both ! ”

“ Yours, ever.”

To this letter the deacon carried a verbal answer to De Lacy, expressive of the regrets of all the family that they should not see him as usual. M. Le Gendre desired him to give up all his slaves, not heeding the sacrifice of property. “ Tell him,” said he, “ that Esther will have enough for both, and that I would prefer giving her to him without a cent, than urging her to marry a prince against her inclination.”

This was quite satisfactory to De Lacy, who, with a thankful and hopeful heart, began to make preparations for his departure ; the deacon promising to look after his poor, as much as possible, and to keep him well informed of all that was going on among them.

When winter had fairly set in, some of the fashionables pressed their calls upon Esther, and

used their best endeavors to draw her into society, as they called it; but she steadily refused their invitations. After a while, they became piqued, and it was rumored abroad that M. Le Gendre was a retired Jew, who cared for no one, and no one cared for him.

M. Le Gendre was still very feeble, and Esther often low-spirited. Music and books seemed to have lost their charm for her. She prayed for wisdom from on high; she felt, she knew, that she was not in the right state of mind; there was a void in her heart, and she involuntarily turned her thoughts to America. The more she thought of the distant land, the pleasanter it seemed to her. She had heard it spoken of as a country where all were equal, except the blacks; and it seemed to her that, if she and her father were there, with their great property, they might do much good. Then she would be nearer to De Lacy; he would be a great comfort to her father.

Esther was often tempted to speak to her father about America, but could never muster courage, till one morning, when he said to her:

"My child, what do you think I have been dreaming about?"

"Going to America," she answered.

"True. But how came you to guess so readily?"

"Because I, too, have dreamed, and made the same journey."

"Is 't possible! And do you think you would like to go there with me?"

"That is, of all things, what I should like best to do, if you could be happy there, my dear father," said Esther, exultingly.

"It seems to me, Esther, that I must go somewhere; this quiet life is what I am unused to; and, perhaps, a sea voyage would build me up again. We could go to New York, Boston, etc., see what there is to be seen, and come back and show ourselves to the deacon and his wife, and then go elsewhere, if we like."

"O, how pleasant! Since you have told me so much about your travels, and now that our friend has left us, I feel a desire to see the new world, of which so much is said."

"De Lacy — O, Esther, if I live to see you

united to him, I shall then be able to lay down my head in peace ! To him am I indebted for the trust I have in Heaven, and the bright hopes of a glorious future. Many, many years have I wandered despairingly about the earth, blaming my heavenly Father for the very chastisements which should have made me better. Thank God, that I now see the error of my ways ! ”

“ Father, dear father, how my heart rejoices to know that we can pray together, having the same trust, and the same faith ! ”

“ Esther, before making any plans for a sea voyage, I will consult a physician, then confer with the deacon and his wife, who, I know, will not consent to taking you away. Can you,—are you willing to sail without your nurse ? ”

“ Yes, my father ; with you, I am willing to go anywhere, be anything, live anyhow ! We will take Louise,—she is a jewel. You never saw such a change as has come over her.”

“ I thought she was a good girl, from the beginning.”

“ I thought so, too ; but, father, I have learned much of human nature in the few short months

that I have lived in Paris. I see that we cannot judge of people by appearances. Louise is good now, and we will forget what she has been."

The physician was consulted, and highly approved of the sea voyage; said that it would do Esther as much good as her father.

Mrs. Day wished to go, too, but it was thought best for her to continue her manifold duties and charities in her present situation of housekeeping.

"If you go to New York, you will have an opportunity of seeing the Tincums," said the deacon.

"O, yes!" replied M. Le Gendre, "and of getting back the money I loaned him."

"Ha! ha! If you get your money back, I'm mistaken in the Tincums. If they had intended to pay, they would have sent it long ago; there have been opportunities enough."

"You judge harshly," said Mrs. Abel; "they, or at least Mrs. Tincum, seemed very honorable. She will see that the debt is paid, I'm sure."

“ And you, my dear, are much mistaken ; very likely she does not know that he had money of M. Le Gendre. It is not in America as here ; there the women seldom know anything of their husbands’ business. Women often marry on suppositions, so to say ; they suppose a young man to be rich, because he has a fine store, or dresses handsomely ; and they suppose it would be nice to be married, and have nothing to do but dress pretty, and rock themselves in a chair all day ; then they suppose that they can afford to live in good style, just like some opulent neighbor. The husband catches the inspiration, and supposes it is for his credit or honor to keep up an appearance, and that some good chance will come for him to make plenty of money. So he goes on ; debts accumulate, and, finally, he supposes it quite necessary to tell his wife that he must turn bankrupt. She supposes so too. They arrange everything very satisfactorily to all parties concerned (except sundry washerwomen, bakers, butchers, etc., who are not easily persuaded that bankruptcy is honorable), and begin the world anew. Now, it strikes me that these good Tincums are blessed with the

India-rubber conscience, which will stretch to accommodate itself to circumstances. We shall see."

Esther applied herself diligently to her English, and, with Mr. Day's assistance, learned rapidly. She also read travels, and, as often as her father's strength would permit, pursued her studies with him.

Thus she occupied herself till within a short time of her departure, when the deacon advised that she should spend a few weeks in looking about her, that she might not, in a foreign country, be a foreigner to her own city. He took her to all public places, where useful knowledge can be obtained, and assisted her in the selection and purchase of what he deemed necessary for her comfort during her absence.

I pass over the tears and prayers of old ladies, poor children and servants, and leave the deacon, his wife, M. Le Gendre, and Esther, to enjoy their last evening pleasantly together. Monsieur leaves his papers, etc., in the care of Mr. Day, and takes with him as much as will enable them to do whatever they wish. He prefers having money with

him, as he is no friend to business, and that has always been his way. He also preferred sailing in a brig; for in steamboats there was too much fashion; ships were too large; but a brig was his favorite.

## CHAPTER X.

### DE LACY'S RETURN.

M. DE LACY found his mother alive, but no hopes were entertained of her recovery. The plantation was in a sad condition, and the poor negroes suffering for want of food and clothing.

The overseer was a very brute, devoid of feeling, and bent upon getting all the labor he could from the slaves, that he might turn it to money on his own account. He had heard, through a female servant of Sarah De Lacy, that her cousin was about to marry a wealthy Jewish heiress, in Paris, and had said that he should never return to America. Mrs. De Lacy was a feeble, indolent woman, the daughter of a planter who had been educated in the belief that negroes were stubborn, heartless wretches, moved only by the lash ; and, if ever a complaint reached her ear, she satisfied herself with the idea that her husband had pampered and spoiled his people, and that nothing but

severity would bring them to. As to the business matters, she knew nothing. How could she make calculations ? There would be enough for her and the annual remittances her son was to receive. She thought things did not go on as well as when her husband lived; but it was no fault of hers — a woman could not be expected to manage so large a plantation. Immediately after the interview with his mother, De Lacy began to look around. The overseer was all attention and politeness, but the poor negroes shuddered and trembled as he approached them.

“What ails that poor fellow’s face ?” said De Lacy, observing an old negro with a rag tied about his head.

“He has been fighting, or bitten by a spider, I suppose, sir,” was the careless answer.

“An old man like him fight ?” ejaculated the young man.

“Yes, sir ; these slaves are sad fellows. I can do nothing with them. The more they are fed, and the better they are treated, the worse they behave.”

Just then an old woman tottered towards them,

exclaiming, "Young master, come quickly,—she will die ! she will die !"

"Don't heed her, sir," said the overseer; "she has been crazy for the last two years,—she knows not what she says."

"Come and see!" screamed she, in such a piercing tone that every fibre in the young man's heart quivered.

And he did go, in spite of the persuasions of the overseer to the contrary.

"Heavens!" exclaimed he, as they entered a miserable cabin, "what means this blood?"

A groan led him to the further side of the cabin, where, behind a pile of stone, boards and other kind of rubbish, lay a girl, mangled and bruised in the most horrible manner. He asked no questions. The sight of that poor mother's face told the tale but too well; and he saw, in an instant, that she had tried to make a barrier to screen her child from further persecution. Turning round, with a commanding voice he ordered the overseer to remove the rubbish, whilst the mother went to call help. A litter was soon prepared, and the poor girl taken to the house. After dressing her

wounds, and leaving her in the care of her mother, he called the overseer, and inquired after those slaves whom he remembered. Some were dead, others sold ; and but few of those belonging to the estate when he left home, remained. These he wished to have brought together the next morning, immediately after breakfast. Heart-sick, he sought his mother's room, and found her in a quiet sleep, two black women, apparently much exhausted, standing by the bedside.

“Sit down, both of you, and sleep, and I will watch to-night,” said De Lacy. But neither moved.

“Why do you not go ?” continued he.

“Mistress will have us flogged, if we move,” said one.

“If we could but get a morsel to eat,” sighed the other, placing her hand upon her stomach.

De Lacy rang the bell. A tall and handsomely dressed mulattress answered the summons, with a polite and smiling “If you please, sir.”

“Bring some refreshments for these women ; and spread a mattress on the floor, that they may rest.”

A scowl and threatening look was her answer, as she tossed up her head and flaunted out of the room. Some moments elapsed, and no person appeared.

“Who is the woman who just left the room?” inquired he.

“Mistress Aborne, the wife of our overseer,” answered the hungry women. “She means to starve us.”

“That she shall not,” said he, ringing the bell violently. Another strange face appeared. “Tell your Mistress Aborne to do as I bade her,” said De Lacy; — and a waiter with food, and a matress were soon brought in. The women ate almost ravenously, and were soon in a profound sleep.

Mrs. De Lacy opened her eyes and shut them several times, shuddering, as she looked upon her son.

“Mother, dear mother!” said he, affectionately; “don’t you know your son, your Louis?”

“Is it you? — I thought it was your father’s spirit. Come nearer, that I may feel you.”

He bent over her head and kissed her.

“Why did you not come to me before? I have written to you so many, many times, to come home.”

“I have all your letters, and there is not a word about your desiring my return,” said her son.

“My child, I have begged you to come to me, with all the fondness of a mother’s heart.”

“As soon as I knew that you wished for me, I came.”

“Sarah said that you were to be married to a Jewess, and never intended to come home.”

“Wicked woman!” exclaimed he.

“Yes, I have been wicked!” murmured the mother.

“I meant *Sarah*,” said he, pressing her hand.

“You never loved her, Louis. I am glad, now, that you did not.” And she fell asleep again.

Hour after hour rolled on, and she waked not. The doctor came, and said she was in a lethargy, and might never wake again.

The night lamp burned dimly, throwing dark shadows on the walls. Hardly a breath escaped

the weary blacks. But the heavy breathing of his mother, and the loud ticking of the entry-clock, at the solemn hour of midnight, brought the spirit of his father, and a host of slaves before him. The former whispered, pointing to the slaves, "Be free." At this instant the death-rattle caused him to spring upon his feet. He had been lost a moment in slumber, and his mother was no more.

With sad and bursting heart he closed her eyes, and went in search of the overseer's wife, for he wished not to disturb the tired women in his mother's chamber. But neither she nor the overseer were to be found; so he awoke the women, who followed his direction in laying out the dead. And he retired to his lone chamber, and the sanctity of his own heart.

Next morning, neither the overseer nor his wife were on the premises; and a package of jewelry, plate, etc., was picked up in the front hall, from which it appeared that they had robbed the house, and left in the night.

Sarah and her aunt came to arrange for the funeral, and De Lacy informed the slaves through

the women, that no work was to be done, until after his mother was buried.

“Let’s go north. I say, Jim, now’s the time. Young Masse so taken up wid de mudder, he no miss us. Oberseer gone, — hope de debbel git him!”

“I’s feer’d oberseer lick us, and sell us. Better stay, Jim, — may be we get freedom and money too. He mus be good, he gib Carrie sich good supper, and let ‘m sleep.”

“Now listen to me, boys,” said the old man, whose eye was bandaged; “if young Masse is like his father, we shall have no more suffering. I remember when he was a little boy, and how kind he was to all of us; — never spoke a hard word, and used to coax his mother not to scold my gal. There was no flogging then, and we all worked, for we knew we’d get pay for it. I had the best cabin of any nigger in Virginny, and was the happiest, too, for I loved Massa, and God was good to us all.”

We leave De Lacy to learn that his mother’s letters had been intercepted, and altered to suit the overseer; that a large amount of property

had been squandered, or stolen; slaves bought and sold—some beaten to death; the poor old man's eye almost put out by a blow from Aborne's fist, and cruelties committed which make us shudder to think of; and go back to Paris.

## CHAPTER XI.

### REVERSES OF FORTUNE.

“BUT, my dear sir, can’t something be done to save at least a part of the property ?”

“No, wife, I tell you no. It’s no use to weep and lament; we must give it up.”

“If it were ours, I could bear the loss; but if they live to come home penniless ——”

“Do not murmur. God is just. We are near-sighted, stubborn mortals, unwilling to submit to his providence. Come, take courage; — more depends on you than you are aware of. Try to make friends with the old man. He is sick; let him see that you care for him, and who knows but that you may influence his hard heart to give up a trifle, should our friends yet live to need it ?”

“They do live, I know they live,” said Mrs. Day. “I cannot give up Esther. I ought to have gone with her.”

"How unreasonable you are, wife! You did what you did for the best. Nay, don't grieve so. I am going now to the owners of the brig; they may have heard something about her. If you can't command your feelings, remain here till I return."

In about two hours Mr. Day returned to his wife, with the sad intelligence that the owners had not heard a word from the brig since the first of June, and had given her up for lost. They supposed that all on board had perished.

Mrs. Day received the mournful news much better than the deacon anticipated. She appeared to have prepared herself for the worst, and to be ready for action. "Whatever you advise, I am willing to do," said she, calmly, while the tears, which for several days had been pent up, began to flow freely.

"You, as I said this morning," replied he, "had better keep your hold in the house, if you can. Monsieur needs a housekeeper, and was pleased with our arrangements. Be as cheerful as possible, and avoid saying anything concerning his brother, as it only irritates him; but persuade

him to keep the old servants. I wish I could relieve you of Kate, for I fear she will get his ill will."

"Mrs. Grey offered to take her, my dear, soon after Esther left," said Mrs. Day. "She thinks she can keep her fully employed, and that is all that is necessary."

"Perhaps I should do well to take her there at once, and that will leave one thing less to worry us," said Mr. Day.

While he was absent, the lawyer whom he had consulted came to get all the particulars of the family, which were substantially as follows :

Count Le Gendre, of German origin, came to Paris, and married an only child of a wealthy recluse, who was also a foreigner. By her he had two sons; the eldest a rough, hardy, muscular boy, who left the parental roof at an early age; and, as nothing was heard from him for a number of years, his parents supposed him to be dead. The other son, Esther's father, was of a mild and gentle disposition, the comfort and only happiness of his mother. Being ten years younger than his brother, he had associated little with him,

and there was no sympathy between them. After the death of his parents, from whom he inherited several millions, he travelled through Europe, then visited America, where he married. Nothing is known of his wife's family; and his only child, a girl of nineteen, is thought to have perished with him in the brig Anne Marie, bound for New York. Two months after they sailed, a man called upon Mr. Day, and inquired for M. Le Gendre. Upon being informed that Monsieur had gone to America, he expressed great disappointment; and, after making very minute inquiries as to his family affairs, took his leave, saying they should hear from him again soon.

A few days after, an officer announced to Mr. Day the arrival of Eugene, brother of Herman Le Gendre, and claimed all papers and property of the former for said Eugene. He stated that the father's property amounted to six millions, half of which belonged to Eugene by right of inheritance, and that if, as is reported, both Herman and his child are dead, he is, of course, the only lawful heir to the whole.

Mr. Day stated that the actual property was

short of three millions ; and, as the fact of Herman's death is not verified, he should not yield his right of guardianship without further legal advice.

Just after this meeting, the conversation between the deacon and his wife, related above, took place.

Meanwhile, Eugene Le Gendre resolved to take up his abode in Herman's house, and seemed determined to carry his point. In a conversation with the deacon, he informed him that he had been induced to join a company of dragoons, who were going East ; that he had fought bravely, and was taken prisoner, and had been many years a slave in Turkey, from whence he escaped by the assistance of a woman. After many struggles and much difficulty, he succeeded in reaching Germany, where he had been again detained by ill health and poverty ; that he had been furnished with money to return to Paris by an American student, who had treated him with much kindness. The student had never given his name. He said that if Herman was alive, he should still claim the property, which was his by right, for his brother

must have lived well to spend so much, whilst he had been suffering for want of food and raiment.

“But is there not enough for both of you, in case my friend returns ?” said Mr. Day.

“I think not,” replied Eugene. “He may consider himself well off if I do not demand interest for the use of my property for so long a time. But you need not fear for yourself,—I shall need some one to manage my business, and you seem to be just the man. I like the arrangements here, and will only step into Herman’s shoes.”

Mrs. Day found it no easy task to wear a cheerful face with a sad heart.

The new master was imperious and fault-finding, and the once happy home became the seat of disquiet and agitation. At times both the deacon and his wife were almost discouraged, and thought to leave ;— but a hope lingered that their friends still lived, and that by patience and continuance in well-doing, they could yet serve them.

Not a word was heard from De Lacy. What could it mean ? Letter after letter had been sent, — why no answer ?

“Perhaps,” said the deacon, one evening, as they were sitting together, “we were too presumptuous, too earthly-minded, and thought only of present happiness, and God will punish us by removing our idols.”

“I cannot think so,” replied Mrs. Day. “I believe that we did right to enjoy what our heavenly Father gave us for that purpose. If we live only in anticipation, there will be little comfort in this world. Do you think Esther was wrong in being so devoted to her earthly duties, and so happy in them?”

“By no means. The thought occurred to me, that you and I had not been watchful enough over ourselves;—that we were not sufficiently weaned from the world. In short, my dear wife, our hopes were here.”

“And so are mine now, my dear husband. I hope to see Esther again. I always felt, and feel now, that God gives us many things for our comfort and pleasure. I have enjoyed much, and, as that dear child used to say, lived long in a short time. Deacon, you should have seen her in her beautiful white dress, kneeling at her morning

devotions. Many a time have I stood and watched her, and joined in all her thoughts and prayers, as if she had been an angel leading me to heaven. She was so sweet-tempered, so good, who could help loving her? Don't call her my idol,—she was my good spirit. Thank God that we were happy with her, and that she loved us so much."

" You are right, my dear wife; God placed us together to aid each other, and we did it; and while we thank Him for the past, let us be willing to accept the present, and be brave for the future, come what will."

" O, deacon, that sounds like yourself, before you were desponding! Now tell me what has happened to-day. I feel that something troubles you more than usual."

" I hate to give you another pang. Why need you question me?"

" I can bear the whole better than a part. Tell me, what has happened?"

" In short, then, Marie must leave the house 't is not safe for her to be here. And how to get her away without incurring the displeasure of that

brute, Eugene, who is not worthy the name of Le Gendre, I do not know.”

“A new trouble, indeed, deacon ; and one that falls on us. What can we do ?”

“I had concluded 't was best to keep a good look-out, and wait for some —”

Just then the noise of a person falling down stairs, caused both the deacon and his wife to spring to their feet.

“Madam !” cried Charlie, “Marie has fallen and broken her leg, I fear !”

“Place her in my bed ;—poor girl ! I will take good care of her myself.”

“How inscrutable are the ways of Providence !” ejaculated Mr. Day.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ESTHER IN ADVERSITY.

“SUMMER, with her sunny face, and perfumed breath, has gayly nodded her head in adieu to us, as she passed on to fairer skies and greener fields, bearing with her the sweet songsters and tinted flowers, and fast in her footsteps comes her sister Autumn, with her ‘horn of plenty,’ scattering blessings o’er the land, and clothing the trees, by a touch of her magic wand, in their gayest attire, in honor of her arrival. The tiny seed which the husbandman planted in the spring-time, has swelled and budded and blossomed, and is now laden with fruit. The red harvest moon, from her home on high, smiles on the fruitful earth, and, peeping through the crevices of the well-filled barns, throws a deeper tinge on the golden sheaves, and bursting hay-stacks. The harvest has come! the merry harvest time, when he who sowed in fruitful soil shall reap in abundance;

the time so anxiously looked for, and warmly welcomed, by the farmers throughout our land. May God bless and reward them for their honest labors ! Prosperity smiles not always on their toil, and their lot is oftentimes hard. Some may have sowed their seed in rocky and unfruitful places ; others, for want of proper attention, have left the yet tender buds to droop and die, and now, as they see their neighbors, who sowed their seed in good soil, and nourished it with tender care, gathering in their bountiful harvest, they gaze sadly on the barren earth, and curse fickle Fortune for their ill-luck. Why should they ascribe their adversity to Fortune ? Know they not they are but reaping their reward ? 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap,' saith the Scriptures.

"What presents a more charming picture than the industrious habitants of some quiet little village, gathering in their golden treasures ? See the honest reaper go out into the field, with his 'gleaming steel,' followed by troops of little laughing gleaners. How swells his heart in gratitude, as he gazes on the waving grain, and vine-yards swelled to bursting,— proofs of his labor !

How fervent the praise that ascends to his Father's throne, for these garnered stores that mother Earth has so plentifully yielded him !

‘Then glory to the steel  
That shines in the reaper’s hand,  
And thanks to God, who has blessed the sod,  
And crowns the harvest-land.’

“Thus, too, will He bless us, if, in the spring-time of life, we sow the seed of virtue, that, when his harvest-time shall come, we shall be gathered up ‘mid his ‘golden sheaves,’ and crowned with life immortal.”

“‘T is very prettily written,’ said Miss G.  
“Who did you say was the authoress ?”

“A charming French girl; so genteel, and so polite,” replied Mr. A. “You know I don’t understand foreigners very well, and I could n’t make out just what she wanted. I wish you would call and see her. I believe she wishes to give lessons, or write for publication, or something to get money by.”

“Then, I pity her, I’m sure,” said Miss G.

“The city has a surplus of teachers; and as to French writings, they would not be well received here in Boston. ’T is true that many people profess to study, but few, I believe, can read French with sufficient ease to make a pleasure of it.”

“There is no doubt that this individual is poor, and I do wish you would try to see her,” continued Mr. A. “If she can sew or crochet, my wife will give her work. Here is a dollar, in case she is in want; that pretty face has something so expressive in it that I am charmed by it. I believe I shall dream of her.”

“If I were a beggar,” said Miss G., laughing, “I would find some pretty-faced girl to touch your heart for me, that I might finger your purse.”

Miss G., who had long been known to the poor in her neighborhood, was herself obliged to live economically; not that she was really poor, but because her income was too small to support her without carefully counting the cost of everything. She looked at the dollar, and said to herself, “If that girl is in want, she ought to have it;

little as it is, it will do some good. O, how I wish I had all the dollars that neighbor C. wastes, how much I might do! 'T is too bad to be nipped and nipped, all the time, for money. No matter if it is cold and late in the afternoon. These October days are short when there 's so much to be done. I 'll go."

So saying, she started, and was soon at the foot of the narrow staircase which led to the little room occupied by the foreigner. She tapped gently at the door,—no one came. Again,—no answer. She lifted the latch and entered. The instant she cast her eyes around the room, poverty and destitution stared at her from every corner, and the little stove, without fire, gave a chill to the air of the cold room. A heavy sigh attracted her to the bed, where lay a man, apparently in great distress. He tried to speak, but could not; he made a sign to be lifted up, and she raised his head; he looked anxiously around, as though something were missing.

Presently, a young woman rushed into the room, and, running to the bed-side, exclaimed, "Have courage, dear father! God has raised up

a friend for us ! See ! See ! ” and she showed him two loaves of fresh bread.

At sight of her a faint smile played upon his lips, as he whispered the name, “ Esther ! ”

She broke the bread, and fed him, before she spoke to Miss G., who still stood near.

“ What is the matter with your father ? ” asked the latter, in French.

“ His heart is diseased, and now he is suffering from the climate, and want of the comforts he has always known, ” replied she, evidently pleased to meet with one who understood her language.

“ I came to see you about your writing. A gentleman sends you this dollar. Shall I stay with your father, or go buy what you wish with it ? ” said Miss G., in her usual kind manner.

“ O, you are very good ! A dollar ! I want some wood ; some flannel for my father ; something to eat ! So many things ! What can I buy ? If you would be so kind, miss, as to get me some wood with it, God will provide the rest, ” added she, cheerfully.

Miss G. went out with a heavy heart. Here was a case of real suffering, and her funds were

too low to relieve it. Rich people there were enough in Boston, and even among her immediate acquaintances, but it was almost hopeless to ask their assistance. Every one had so much to do for the poor, that, really, they never could look into any new case. Then, again, they have so many expenses, they can hardly afford to give away. The ladies seldom have ready money on hand, and the gentlemen cannot attend to such little things, they support alms-houses and the like, and say, let poor people take the advantage of such institutions, and think themselves well off. "Yes, Providence will provide," cogitated she, and away she went to secure the wood, and find a man to put it in that evening.

Before nine o'clock, Esther had a good fire; her father was warmed and refreshed, and, with tears of gratitude, she knelt down, and thanked Him, who had thus sent a light to cheer her in her hour of darkness, to which her father heartily responded, "Amen!"

The wood and little candle must be husbanded for future want; so Esther retired to her place of rest, on the outside of her father's bed, though

unable to undress herself, for the want of clothes to cover her there. Her father had pawned his watch for their scanty articles of furniture, and she only hoped that, at some future time, she should be able to earn a mattress and comforter, that she might stretch out her limbs, and have one such night's repose as she was wont to have in her own dear white chamber in Paris.

“Esther,” said her father, “what have you done, my child, to get that nice bread, and all this pile of wood?”

“I met a woman,” answered she, “whom I supposed to be French, and asked her if she could tell me where to go for work. Just then, a young man, no not a young man, but a man, stopped where we stood; he looked curiously at me, then at the woman, and they talked about me so low that I could not hear what they said. The woman told me, if I would go with them, they would give me what I wished; so I ran along as far as a baker's shop, when I made signs that I wanted bread; the man gave me the bread, and told me to meet him there to-morrow at the same time, and that he would give me as much bread

as I needed, and I could pay him for it. Now, is n't that a very happy circumstance? I am so thankful!"

"My dear Esther, you must not meet that man again, unless I am well enough to go with you. God be praised that they let you come home safely! Did not they ask you to go with them?"

"O, yes! I am to go with them to get the work to pay for the bread! The woman urged me not to be in such a hurry, to-night; but I promised to go again, and ran as fast as I could, for I feared I should lose my way."

"Must it be so? My darling run in the face of danger for a morsel of bread! Heavens! what sins have I committed to merit such a punishment?" Here the poor man sobbed audibly, quite to the astonishment of Esther, who repeated,

"My father, ought we not to be thankful that our wants are so well supplied? I don't understand your trouble."

As soon as he was a little calm, he told her that wicked men and women often enticed innocent females into places of wickedness, and that he

doubted not that it was the intention of this man and woman to ruin her.

Poor Esther shuddered at the thought of the danger into which she was about placing herself, and resolved to do nothing without her father's advice.

"You did not tell me about the wood," said he.

"The lady whom I found in the room, when I came back, bought it with the dollar a gentleman gave her for the little scrap of French I wrote after we took that walk into the country a while ago," responded Esther. "O, I will write so much, if I can sell it, and we may yet be happy, even in this cold country!"

"I do not wish to check your hopes, daughter," said he; "but I think the dollar was a gift, rather than the price of the writing. The gentleman told me, the other day, that it was almost impossible for anybody to earn a living in such a way; and, though you write well enough, there are thousands who write better; beside, that pile of wood was never bought and brought up here for that money. Our blessing of to-day was in the

coming of that woman. I'm sure she is kind, and will feel for us. Did you notice how much her voice sounded like Mrs. Abel's, — Mrs. Day's, I mean?"

"Indeed, I did!" answered Esther. "Why don't they answer your letters? The deacon is so careful, and loves us so much. I fear something terrible has happened!"

"I hope nothing has happened to them, and that they are comfortably enjoying our property, or taking care of it for us. May be they think us dead."

Here Esther dropped asleep, and the conversation ceased.

Next morning, M. Le Gendre determined to write again to the deacon, and also to M. De Lacy; but he was unable to go into a store and write as he had done before, and Esther had used their last sheet of paper.

They ate their bread with thankfulness, and Esther set about clearing up their room, when Miss G. again knocked at the door. With a smiling face she entered, and her look was, to both, like that of their absent friend.

"I am so glad to see you!" said Esther. "I want to thank you for getting this wood for us. It is so pleasant to feel warm. We never felt such chilling winds at home as we have here."

"Perhaps you never knew the want of a fire at home, my dear," meekly replied Miss G.

"Never, madam, never," ejaculated Monsieur.

"I came this morning so early, to see if you can help me do some fine needle-work. We are not well paid for it, but it is better than nothing."

"Indeed, I am very, very glad to do anything; and thank God for all his mercies."

"That is the right spirit, miss," replied Miss G. "While you have that feeling, you will be strong enough to bear whatever comes. When we are more acquainted, I hope you will tell me all about yourself. I know that you have seen better days."

"It is not necessary to wait for that, madam," said M. Le Gendre. "I can tell you in a few brief words, that we were wealthy enough to have all that we desired, and help our poor brothers. We left home for a sea voyage,—were ship-

wrecked. I held Esther in my arms during twenty-four hours, after the vessel began to fill. What became of us, for a week after the wreck, we know not. When I awoke to consciousness, I found myself in a fishing vessel, with my child lying at my side. At first, all seemed confused like a dream ; by and by I realized our situation, but I feared for nothing but Esther's life ; — for that I prayed. I promised to be patient under all other afflictions. God heard my prayer, and now he proves my faith. I am afflicted, but not cast down. My life is in the hands of my Maker, and I shall not despair. Blessed be the name of the Lord ! We were landed, — strangers in a strange land, — my child and I. The money that was in my pocket-book, my watch, studs, finger-rings, buckles, have all been sold, one after another. Now there is nothing left. If I could but get an answer to the letters I have sent home, all would be right."

"But, father," interrupted Esther, "can't we obtain the money the Tincums owe ?"

"I have thought of that," replied he.

"What Tincums ?" asked Miss G.

"Of New York. They were in Paris,—came to our house repeatedly," answered he; "and when about to leave, borrowed a large sum, promising to write to us, and pay on their return, etc.; but we have never heard a word from them."

"I presume I know the family, and if you will write, I can see that the letter is safely delivered. And here," added she, "is the payment for the work I leave with you. Do it as well as you can, and I will try to procure more. Now I must go, for I have many things to do to-day."

As Miss G. supposed, the Tincums were on a visit to their friends in Boston, and she determined to see them if it were possible. The next morning, at about ten, she called,—was told that Mrs. Tincum was not up,—could not see any one until twelve o'clock. At twelve Miss G. went again. The instant she cast her eyes on the splendidly-dressed lady, she said to herself, "I'll sound her before I ask her to pay her debts." At that moment, a shop-boy was ushered in with a box of opera cloaks. She begged Miss G. to excuse her till she should examine them. One was too coarse; another not the right shade for her com-

plexion; one she thought she could take; she did n't quite like the embroidery, but it might do to wear once or twice,—she seldom wore anything so common. The price was seventy-five dollars,—she would prefer giving more if she could be suited. The cloak was left, and the boy dismissed, with orders to take the bill to her husband at his office. Miss G. inquired if she were acquainted with the *Le Gendres* of Paris.

“Indeed, I am,” said she. “They were a father and daughter; charming people, and immensely rich. I should be delighted to see them!”

“You can have an opportunity now, madam. They are in Boston, and will be glad to meet you. Here, I have a letter from Monsieur to your husband.”

“Is it possible! I have not heard of their arrival. When, and how did they come?”

“They were on board the new brig *Anna Marie*, which was lost at sea a few months since, and are here in a state of destitution and suffering. They live in Utica street. I will go show you where they live, if you like.”

“Not to-day. I have a bad headache, and my nerves are very weak. I don’t think I could bear the shock.”

“There is an account between you and them. If you will settle that, it will much relieve their pressing wants.”

“O, we don’t owe them anything !”

“Did not your husband borrow money of Monsieur Le Gendre, previous to his return to America ?”

“I don’t know but he did. Yes, I rather think he did ; but that has been settled long ago.”

“You are mistaken, my dear madam ; — the debt remains unpaid, and I beg you, in the name of charity, if not of justice, to attend to it immediately.”

“Why, I’m sure I can do nothing about it ! My husband has failed since we came home, and I supposed that everything of that sort was arranged.”

“But, excuse me, madam, don’t you feel that you owe this man all the more, now that he is suffering for the very money you spend on bau-bles ? The price of that opera-cloak, which you

say you shall wear only once or twice, would make him and his daughter comfortable for weeks."

"We don't pay for our goods at once. My husband lets his bills stand till it is convenient to settle. I'm sure he would be willing to pay M. Le Gendre, but he cannot now,—he can't afford it, absolutely. We are poor ourselves."

A servant entered, followed by an Irish wash-erwoman, who exclaimed,

"Och, ma'am, and sure I can't be for comin' here agin ; it's the pity if the like o' ye don't pay for the wash. An' sure, an' my husband is sick, and the childer are hungry, an' I want me du."

"Why did you allow that brawling woman to come into the parlor, when I have company ?" said she to the domestic.

"An' you don't send me off once more," said the woman, seating herself, "for I'll stay till I'm paid."

"Bring me the vinaigrette—I shall faint," said Mrs. Tincum.

The man turned away with a sneer.

Mrs. Tincum began to fumble in her pocket.

She drew forth an elegantly embroidered hand-kerchief, and wiped her forehead. The bell rang again.

“Don’t bring any one else here!” screamed she, drawing an elegant purse from the depths profound; and, taking out some small pieces of silver, she offered them to the Irish woman, who refused to take less than her due. After some angry words on both sides, the five dollars were handed her; and she went out of the room, saying,

“May mischief take the like o’ ye, and never send me another of your lace rags to wash!—That’s the way of fine ladies as ye are.”

“O, how annoying!” sighed Mrs. Tincum.

Miss G. was pleased with the independence of the washerwoman, and kept her sitting. She saw that there was plenty of money in the purse, and she hoped to prevail upon Mrs. Tincum to pay at least a moiety of what she owed. But not so;—the hard-hearted woman declared that they had no demands on her, and she was not able to be charitable. It could not be expected from unfortunate people, who had just failed.

At length, evidently afraid that Miss G. would not go before other callers came, she offered her a twenty-five cent piece for them, saying she would call and see them as soon as she felt strong enough, and hoped to do more.

Miss G. was indignant at the meanness of the *gift*, as Mrs. Tincum called it, yet thought it best to take it, lest the weak woman should flatter herself that she had wished to give to the needy, but had been refused, and it was not her fault if they did suffer.

The same evening Mrs. Tincum's splendid dress and elegant appearance attracted the attention of the fashionables ; and Mr. Tincum wriggled about in his seat, evidently much delighted with the idea of having overbid a rich gentleman at the ticket auction.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ESTHER'S JOURNAL.

“Nov. 12. For more than three weeks I have sewed and sewed with all my might, and have hardly been able to keep soul and body together. How I wish that that young lady would take French lessons of father! — It would be a great help to us. Poor man! how thankful he was for that little bowl of chocolate; and how very kind Miss G. is! Alas! I fear she injures herself in doing so much for us. She looked sick to-day. How I wished to work for her and help her, when she is so hurried!

“Nov. 13. My eyes ache badly. What will become of us if I cannot see to do this fine needle-work? O, how my blood boiled, when that cruel woman tried to beat me down in my work! How could she expect so much for so little money? Great God, forgive! I do not mean to complain. I have been blessed beyond measure, and it is

right that I should learn, by experience, what others suffer. I fear that I have too little courage. To-morrow, if I live, I will be cheerful all day. I will try to find pleasure in my work.

“Nov. 15. Now that I have a mattress to myself, I shall rest better and feel stronger. Holy Father! I thank thee that I am enabled to do the work which thou givest me to do.

“Nov. 21. So much time has elapsed, and I have not been able to take my pen in my hand. They prepare for Thanksgiving, as they call it. They ought to be thankful every day. Miss G. tells me that the families meet together, and have pleasant entertainments. She has brought us a chicken, all nicely cooked. I hope I may be sufficiently thankful. If I could meet with my friends! Have I no relatives? I dare not agitate my father by speaking of them, though my heart is bursting with impatience. O, if I only knew who and where De Lacy is! — Stop, stop rebellious thoughts, and cease ye tears to flow! God forgive me, I do not mean to repine! I am thankful.

“Nov. 22. Father has seemed so much like himself all day. We, too, have had a pleasant Thanksgiving. How kind of Mr. A. to send us that French book! Words are sweeter in French than in English; it may be because it is my native tongue. How strange we are! Last night I went to sleep crying for sorrow, and to-night I cry for joy. We really do live tolerably well. Who knows but that I shall yet be able to get an overcoat, so that father may go out a little every day? I don’t care about any other shawl, now that I have this knit jacket. How strange that ladies should offer me old clothes in payment for work!—but I am glad of this jacket; ’t is almost as good as money. O, my eyes, how much they pain me!

“Nov. 25. . When shall I be patient as I ought? To-day I became very much excited. I must have looked angry. I thought, then, that I could not help it, but I see that I was wrong. May I be forgiven all these sins. I will try to do better. Alas! Mrs. Day used to tell me that I was mild and gentle. What would she say, were she to see me in contact with these

mean people? A woman call herself a lady, and try to cheat me out of my just dues! But I will make my father as comfortable as I can, at any sacrifice to myself. I feel that he is not long to be with me. O, that frightful cough! How it chills my blood! Heavenly Father, help me to do right!

“Nov. 30. A dog to board! Who ever heard of such a thing? Dear little creature, I begin to love him already. Well, this will be a great help, — one dollar a week, — and Miss G. says she can bring enough for him to eat, except a little milk now and then. The lady thinks of being gone two months, — that will be eight dollars. O, how much I can do with eight dollars! And then I am to crochet evenings; that will spare my eyes. God be praised for all his mercy!

“Dec. 1. How cold it has been all day! Winter has come in earnest. I wonder what this pain in my shoulders means. I never had such pains before. Always complaining. Come, dear little pet, — that’s right, your good coat will keep my feet warm. You will warm the bed so much, that I can spare my jacket for father’s feet. I

wonder what the deacon would say to our style of living now? I should really like Aunt Nannie's black cat, to wink at me in this lonely room. Christmas is coming, and I shall make no presents this time. When shall we hear from France? Why, what a mess for a journal! Well, it's lucky no one sees it but myself. Somehow, I feel very happy to-night. I believe the dog will do me good, he smiles so prettily; and we love each other, don't we pet? Ten o'clock, — O dear! I ought not to burn a lamp till this time. 'T will never do!

*“Dec. 2. Last night I had such a dream! I hope I can dream the same to-night. Why need I think so much of De Lacy? O, my Father in heaven, forgive these tears! Thou knowest my heart, that I am contented with my lot! If I must never see that dear face again, thy will be done.*

*“Dec. 3. This morning I did not rise till eight for the wood was nearly gone, and I thought to keep warm in bed and save it. Then I found father too weak to get up. How hard it was to tell him I had no money, when he asked*

for chocolate. O, dear ! it has been a day of trials. I wish I did n't need the work of that impertinent fellow ; but he pays well, and I suppose I must be insulted to humble my pride. God bless Miss G. tenfold, for her loving-kindness ! What could I do without her ? She is my patron saint. Well, I will muster courage and go with her to-morrow ; but how can I leave my father long enough to give lessons, if they take me ? He who knows what 's best will order all !

“ *Dec. 7.* Now do I feel that my cup of affliction is full to overflowing. Help, Lord, or I perish ! Dear father ! how can I part from him ? What will become of me ? O, I am sick, sick at heart ! Lord, save thy servant who trusteth in thee ! Feign would I *say*, ‘ Thy will be done,’ but my stubborn *heart* refuses. I cannot give up that dear parent ! How selfish I am ! I know the change would be for his good, and yet I am not willing to let him go. What is life to that poor soul ! O, that I could lie down with him in the grave !

“ *Dec. 10.* One evil seldom comes alone. The doctor says he must die ; and the letter that we

have so long prayed for, comes just in time to give the final dash to all my hopes. And so my uncle has really taken all the property from us, and treats the deacon and his wife ill. They bear it with the true Christian spirit. I should like to go to them, but they advise me to keep out of his sight. Well, I can, at least, hear from those dear friends, and that will be a great comfort, let me be where I may. The money they send will be a help. Why am I always repining ? I deserve punishment. It is an unspeakable blessing to see my dear father so ready to depart; to hear his prayers, and receive his benedictions. Would to Heaven that I were as good as he thinks I am ! Because he does not see me weep, and I try to appear cheerful, he thinks I am so, and praises me for it. Great and infinite Maker of all things, visible and invisible, renew thy spirit in the heart of thy weak servant !

“ *Dec. 28. O, heart ! cease thy beatings ! My head ! my head ! What are poverty, sickness and death, to the taunts and insults of those unfeeling — Sarah De Lacy ! How could she cross my track again ? Yes, yes ! I who gave the splendid*

entertainment in Paris, as she said, I am now beneath her notice, and she sweeps by me as if I were an object vile! What am I? The same Esther as in Paris! A creature in God's image, who asks nothing of her, of any one, but work. Work I must have to live, and I have a right to live, for God in heaven is as much my father as hers. What do I say? O, deacon! Mrs. Abel! De Lacy!—yes, De Lacy!—pray, pray for me!

*“ Dec. 29. How differently I feel, from what I did last night! I thought I was crazy! 'T was very foolish to be so much excited, because that woman looked and spoke so scornfully. I hope the tears I have shed to-day were penitential tears, and that the Almighty will give me strength to endure whatever he is pleased to put upon me! ”*

## CHAPTER XIV.

### M. LE GENDRE'S DEATH.

M. LE GENDRE grew weaker and weaker. He did not appear to suffer much, but to lose strength from day to day. He asked Mr. A. for paper and pen, on the second of January, and, with a feeble hand, traced a few lines to the father of his wife, in St. Augustine. This he carefully sealed, and, calling Esther to his bed-side, he advised her to seek out her grandfather, and try to make herself happy in his family until something should favor her return to Paris. "Good and dutiful child," said he, "receive your father's blessing. I know that God will order all things well; and I doubt not that there is earthly happiness in store for you. Remember, my child, that trust in God is worth more than all the pomp and glory of this world, and that your good conduct has rendered your father's end a happy one." His voice failed. Mr. A. laid him gently back on his pillow. Miss

G. and Esther stood at his side. He opened his eyes, and faintly whispered, "Thanks!" then fell into a quiet sleep, from which he never awoke on earth. The next day he was a corpse.

Esther's grief was quiet and chastened. Her soul appeared to be with his in the land of spirits.

Mr. A. and Miss G. gave him as decent a burial as circumstances would admit. It was then thought advisable to fit Esther out for her relatives as soon as possible. The physician, who had attended her father, advised that she should not remain in Boston till spring, the climate being unfavorable to her delicate constitution.

Miss G. fully appreciated Esther's delicacy and independent spirit; and had spared her many hard rubs with those ladies, who wish their work done in the best manner, and pay for it with cast-off finery. She had often paid doubly for a piece of embroidery, from her own pocket, and rejoiced that she had done so when she saw the gratitude of father and daughter for all that the Lord did for them.

The money received for the care of the dog,

together with the remittance from the deacon, would make a comfortable outfit for Esther.

It appeared, from Mr. Day's letter, that Eugene was far less generous than his brother, and had so much retrenched the charitable operations, that they were obliged to use their own funds, which were, at the date of the letter, very low.

Sarah De Lacy was, as Louis told the deacon, artful and cunning. Previous to leaving Paris, she accidentally met Christophe, whom she bribed to notify her of all that was going on in the Le Gendre family, and also to intercept, as far as he could, any communications between them and her cousin, should he travel, as she expected he would. Christophe leagued with Charlie, who told him all that was going on, thus enabling him to gratify Sarah in her wicked schemes.

She rejoiced in her own heart, but lisped not a word of the loss of the Anne Marie and her people. To her cousin she was more kind and attentive, and so far won upon his affections, that, when she left to visit her friends at the North, he regretted her absence, and begged her to return soon.

In a letter to her aunt, Sarah, as if influenced

by the spirit of evil, enclosed a note to Louis, informing him that his jewel, Melle. Le Gendre, was quite a public character in Boston.

This puzzled the young man exceedingly. Was Esther in Boston? How came she there? What sort of a public life could his cousin mean? There was a mystery about it. Why had he not had letters from the deacon? Something was wrong about it. So he wrote immediately to Paris, requesting Mr. Day, in the most affectionate manner, to relieve his mind from its distressing anxiety. Then, in as cool a manner as possible, he asked Sarah what she referred to concerning Esther. To the last letter the answer was that the young lady was now nothing more than a beggar in Boston. She had seen Mrs. Tineum, who had herself administered to Esther's necessities; and, moreover, she saw Esther, with her own eyes, receive money from a lady as compensation for taking care of a dog.

On reading this letter, De Lacy became greatly excited; at first he thought it was written to see what he would do; then he believed it true, and rightly supposed that some terrible catastrophe

had driven her to the necessity of seeking a living in the new world. How it could be, he could not understand. What he was to do, he knew not ; he had freed as many of his slaves as chose to take their freedom, and the rest needed his constant care for a time. His means were limited, and his labors great ; yet he determined to leave all, and go in search of Esther. But now a new difficulty arose ; should he depart suddenly, Sarah would be at once convinced that he was in pursuit of Esther, and might put her wicked threats of persuading his aunt to disinherit him into execution.

The thought of that young lady being cast upon the world so completely absorbed his mind, that it seemed to him a duty to find and help her. Calling the blacks about him, he addressed them thus : " My friends, you know how much I like to be with and assist you in your labors. You know that I would not willingly separate myself from my own family, unless duty called ; and an imperative duty does call me away for a time. Can you, will you manifest your love for me, by going on with your work just as if I were present with you ? "

"Yes, masse, yes! If you mus' go."

"It is my wish to leave quietly; if you will help me, with God's blessing, I trust I shall succeed in what I undertake."

"Yes, masse; God be good!"

"Well, then, let me tell you each to do his own work without interfering with the other. If all is right, and you do your best, I hope to bring a friend to live with us, who will increase our happiness as a family."

"Masse," said an old man, "'scuse poor old nigger, but, I tell you what 't is, we mus' hab somebody to head us. These niggers don't know nothing, — how can um work?"

"What do you wish to have done?" said De Lacy.

"You choose one to tell the oder, — not ober-seer, — we don't want um. Only jist so to go straight," continued the old man.

"I choose you, Sammie. What do the rest of you say?" called out De Lacy.

"Yes, yes! Sammie good! He knows whot!" shouted several voices. "And the cook for house-misses! That go well!"

"Lor' bless masse's young heart! I never thought of sich 'oners, and I fere I can no be 'sponsible fur sich high office!" exclaimed Sammie.

But the general voice was in favor of Sammie, and he was duly installed as a sort of patriarch to the rest. He was well qualified for his task, and his master set about making preparations for his departure, with a much lighter heart than he had anticipated. He remembered how faithful Sammie had been to his father, and he saw that he was respected by his fellow-servants, which was good proof of his influence upon them. Besides, Sammie was a Christian; he knew that the eye of the Almighty was upon him, and he wished to live so that he could feel that his Father loved him with the love of a dear parent, who makes no distinction in his earthly children.

De Lacy, fearing the interference of his aunt's overseer, should his own absence be noticed, gave written instructions into the hands of Sammie, signifying that he wished his people to exercise their own discretion in managing affairs, and be left to themselves until his return.

Arriving in Boston, he found that his cousin had gone to Washington with her friends. He now tried to find the Tincums, but they, too, had left on a tour of pleasure. Whom to ask for Esther, or where to go in pursuit of her, he knew not. Day after day he spent in searching among the poor, and inquiring of the benevolent, but all to no purpose. Passing through Washington street one day, he was accosted by an interesting child, about six years old, who asked him to go with her to Summer street, as she could not find it. He, having nothing to do, led her to the place, and then to the door of a genteel house.

“O, there comes Louise !” said the child, bounding towards a young woman, whom De Lacy thought he recognized. The moment she put her eye on him she cried out,

“M. De Lacy ! Where, where is Esther ?”

“Is it you, Louise ?” replied he. “And can you not tell me where she is ?”

Louise invited him into the house, where she gave him a minute account of all that had happened. After the shipwreck, she had been taken on board a vessel bound for Boston, and immedi-

ately on her landing, had been placed, by the captain of the vessel, in the family where she now lived, to teach the children French ; that she had not heard a word from France, and it was generally supposed that all on board the *Anne Marie* were lost. She should be quite happy, for the people were very kind to her, if she could hear from her country once more, and be sure about Esther. She had thought and dreamed so much of her, that she was almost persuaded that she was in the land of the living.

M. De Lacy, in his turn, told her what he had heard through his cousin, and of his attempts to get some trace of Esther.

Louise naturally related to the lady with whom she lived the purport of the gentleman's visit, and she in turn related it to some lady visitors who called upon her the next morning ; one of them had a young gentleman friend, who had cravats, etc., beautifully wrought by a foreigner, who, she thought, might be the person. She promised to inquire, and, a few days after, Louise accompanied Louis to the house of Miss G., who was out of town. Her mother, however,

told him all she knew of Esther, greatly praising her piety and devotion to her. She then gave him what she thought to be the address of Esther's grandfather in Cuba.

Highly delighted with what he had heard of Esther's nobleness and virtue, under so many difficulties, he set out immediately for Cuba; promising to inform Louise of further success.

Pleasant weather and propitious winds soon landed him at Havana, from whence he was directed to Matanzas. He found the family whose address he had, but they were ignorant of such a person as Esther Le Gendre.

Buoyant in hope, persevering in purpose, trusting in a guiding Providence, De Lacy was disappointed, but not discouraged.

He returned at once to Boston, to get more particular information from Miss Goddard herself.

## CHAPTER XV.

### OPPRESSION'S DEVICES.

"WELL, wife, I have at length found out who our nice young lady's grandfather is," said Mr. Brown.

"I am thankful," ejaculated Mrs. Brown, "the dear, young creature seems so lonely and sad. I've not been able to persuade her to go out with me since we arrived. She is very interesting. Don't you think her a very sensible person?"

"Remarkable, for a negress," said Mr. Brown, very sarcastically.

"What? I don't understand you," exclaimed the lady.

"Easy enough understood!" retorted Mr. Brown. "That freesoiler has played the Yankee with me. What impertinence, to palm a mulattress upon our care and society! He must

have seen that she had black blood in her ; — any fool could see it."

" Why did you not refuse to take her under your protection," said Mrs. Brown, very much affected, " if you knew it? Cruel man, to expose your wife to the sneers of the other passengers ! Here I have waited upon that girl as if she had been a princess, and all to please you. Shame ! shame ! " and she burst into tears.

" Indeed, madam ! " replied Mr. Brown, in a very angry tone ; " so you wish to blame me for your own foolish generosity ? When I spoke to you about the girl, did n't you say, take her by all means ? "

" Certainly ; — what should I have said, when you were so anxious to oblige Mr. A. ? " said she.

" And have n't you been praising her every day since we left Boston ? I should like to know that ! " almost shouted the affectionate husband.

" Well, but I did n't know that she was black, " responded the lady, more mildly.

Here the entrance of a servant put an end to the interesting conversation.

At supper Esther was not invited to partake

with Mr. and Mrs. Brown, as heretofore, but was served, in her own little room, by a domestic who had listened to what was spoken in such angry tones, and whose curiosity was so much excited, that she resolved to make bold and ask the young lady herself what friends she had in the place.

Esther answered her questions freely, and then inquired why she asked.

“Because I thought it might be of service to you, miss, to know that you’d better go to your relations as quickly as possible. Mr. Brown has ascertained that you belong to a colored family; and if he is like other gentlemen who live upon the blood of us poor slaves, so to say, he will try to get some excuse for making out that you are a slave, so as to sell you. I have tested the tender mercies of these white people, before I bought my freedom; and I don’t trust any of them.”

Esther thanked her kindly for the interest she took in her welfare, and begged, if the captain of the barque in which they came to Charleston was lodging in the house, that she would procure an interview for her.

Poor Esther ! she did not close her eyes that night.

The girl was right in her conjectures. Mr. Brown, after his passion, at what he thought being imposed upon, had subsided. began to think that he would make the best of it by quietly returning to his own plantation with Esther. He supposed that she, being a young, timid and inexperienced person, might be easily managed, and thus become a valuable acquisition to his household.

At breakfast, much to the astonishment of his wife, he went to call Esther himself; and, after greeting her kindly, told her that he had not been able to get information of her grandfather, and would take her home with his wife, until he should receive further directions from her friend, Mr. A., to whom he had already written.

Mrs. Brown attempted to speak, but a look from her husband silenced her.

Esther made no reply, but turned an imploring glance to the domestic, who was waiting at table, which was answered by a significant nod.

After breakfast, Esther retired to her room,

and devoutly resigned herself to the care of her Maker. All night she had wept and prayed, and now a heavenly calmness took possession of her soul. Something seemed to say to her, "Be quiet, Esther; God is with you." And she looked up almost expecting to see a protector near her; but no living mortal was there. She was alone,—yet not alone, for her spirit was communing with the invisible.

Mrs. Brown, before going out to take leave of friends, came to Esther and desired her to prepare to go with them immediately after dinner. Her manner was unusually kind, and Esther thought she had been weeping. As soon as she was out of sight, the girl before spoken of carefully crept into her room, and, thrusting a letter into her hand, whispered, "'T is yours. I took it from his pocket."

Esther opened it with a trembling hand. It was a letter from a store-keeper in St. Augustine to Mr. Brown, stating that Gaetano Lopez, her grandfather, was a wealthy negro, living about two miles from the city on his own plantation; that he was an old resident, and much respected

for a man of color. It then gave minute directions for finding his place, etc. Here was a ray of hope for Esther. She copied the letter carefully, and returned it to the woman. For some hours she sat thinking and thinking, but could not determine what step to take. Should she throw herself upon the master of the house for protection? Lucile, who was certainly acting friendly towards her, said there was no trust in these men. Should she attempt to run away, where could she go? Again she wept and prayed, and again a spirit whispered "peace."

At dinner she excused herself, on a plea of headache. Mrs. Brown came to her, and, by her affectionate manner, encouraged the sufferer to hope that she did not conspire with her husband against her. Once or twice Esther was tempted to ask what were Mr. Brown's intentions with regard to her, but prudence forbade. Her head did ache violently, but her heart was more at ease. She felt that the same Providence which had preserved her thus far, could still preserve; and though she saw not the means of escape, she hoped, she trusted, that all would yet be well.

After dinner, angry words between Mr. and Mrs. Brown attracted her attention. The idea of listening was repugnant to her sense of honor, yet her safety, her freedom, and perhaps her life, were pending, and for the first time she tried to hear that which was not intended for her ears.

"I told you that I must go this afternoon, and you might have been ready. 'T is n't the first time that you have served me so!" said Mr. Brown.

"Do go, if you must, and I will follow you in a day or two," replied his wife.

"That would be fine. And what's to be done with Esther?—you know I can't take her without you," continued he.

"Leave her with me; I'll take care of her," answered Mrs. Brown.

"No, you don't let her slip through my fingers. I'll tell you; she's too good a prize. I shall order the carriage in two hours, and you see that all is ready, madam. I won't be balked by your nonsense," growled he.

"You can as well wait till to-morrow morning, my dear," insisted Mrs. Brown.

"And you can as well go now, my dear," urged Mr. Brown.

But the journey was postponed till the morrow, and Esther went to bed and to sleep.

She was aroused by some one creeping into her chamber, and, before she was able to move, she was wrapped in the bed-clothes, head and feet, and carried off. Scream she could not; but she struggled hard for some minutes, when, finding herself firmly held by two persons, and carried rapidly forward, she yielded quietly to her fate, commanding herself to Him in whom she trusted. Presently they placed her in some vehicle, in a lying posture, still holding her as if to prevent being seen or heard, and drove off at a rapid rate. After riding she knew not how long, they stopped and lifted her gently out, and into a room, shutting the door after them. She heard the carriage drive away before her head was uncovered. Her heart beat violently; her breath was almost gone; she trembled, and dared not open her eyes, till the gentle voice of Lucile cried out, "Courage, miss, you are saved!"

"Where am I?" cried Esther, wildly.

“Among your friends,” said another sweet voice, and a handsome negress smiled pleasantly upon her.

“Are you my relations? Where is my grandfather?” exclaimed the astonished Esther.

“We are not,” said Lucile; “but this woman knows your grandfather, and will go to him as soon as Mr. Brown is out of the way.”

A shudder came over Esther at the name of Brown; and, as if the man were ready to seize her, she stared around for a place to hide herself.

“I must leave you and go back to the house, that I be not missed,” said Lucile. “My sister will take good care of you till your grandfather comes.”

“How can you get back, ‘t is so far?” asked Esther.

“I suppose it seemed far, but it is only two miles; and James is waiting with the wagon at some distance. God bless you,” said she; and took her leave.

The other woman sat by, and talked soothingly to the grateful Esther, who asked many questions

of her grandfather and the inhabitants; of the insecurity of people who had African blood in their veins, and of the estimation in which colored people were held.

“We are vilified, degraded and depressed by the whites !” replied the woman, mournfully “Less esteemed than the dog whom his master pets and caresses. O, miss, I have been a slave ! — a slave to people who called themselves Christians ! I will not pain you with my sufferings, — the very remembrance of which makes me shudder.”

“How did you get away ?” interrupted the attentive listener.

“I was a house girl. My mistress, Sarah De Lacy, gave me no rest night nor day.”

At the name De Lacy, a groan escaped Esther, which the woman attributed to fear, and continued :

“A domestic belonging to your grandfather, became attached to me, and we were secretly married. As soon as my mistress discovered it, her anger knew no bounds ; and I think I should have died under the lashing inflicted by her

orders, had not her aunt, who is more merciful, interfered, and M. Lopez generously bought me. He pitied me, and after teaching me many useful things, and directing my thoughts heavenward, he removed us to this place, where we are free and as happy as we can be in this world. We have our papers, in case your grandfather dies. But we are saving from our earnings, now, to pay the moderate price he expects from us. Now you can understand why Lucile was so much interested in you when she first saw you with Mr. Brown. She knew that you were not white, and her curiosity was excited; for she has seen him buy several girls, and, at first, thought you might belong to him. Then you ate at table with them, and she mistrusted mischief, and was on the look-out. As soon as Mr. Brown told about the letter from Mr. Lopez, she came to me, and my husband and we planned your escape. They took you as they did, so that if any one saw them, they would not suppose they were befriending you, or, at least, would take less notice than if you had been seen in their company. Now, Lucile will return and dress your bed. James

will come home, and Mr. Brown will never mistrust where you are. I should enjoy seeing him foam and spout; but he will not dare say much, for the keeper of the house is not his friend, and could put him in prison if he would expose him. Do tell me how you came under his care."

"My friends in Boston inquired for a good person, and he was recommended to them," said Esther.

"Then they did not know his character here. I am glad of that. I have been thinking you were entrapped in the first place."

"O, no!" said Esther; "never were better people than those who sent me here. I'm sure they did what they did for the best."

"Now go to sleep, my dear," said the kind-hearted woman, seeing her look heavy and tired. "In the morning you will know how prettily we live; and I hope to make you happy till good Uncle Lopez comes."

With a deep sense of her dependence upon Almighty power, and a heart teeming with thanksgiving, did Esther close her eyes in sleep, for the few hours which remained of the night.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ESTHER REACHES HER RELATIVES.

ESTHER dreamed that she was at home, in her own pretty white chamber; that the vases were filled with fresh flowers of the sweetest fragrance, and that Kate was busily employed in dipping the petals of a beautiful rose in the inkstand, laughing and crying out, from time to time, “Nigger! nigger!”

She awoke, and found herself, indeed, in a white chamber. The walls were whitewashed, the curtains of clear white muslin, and vases of sweet-scented flowers, apparently just gathered, adorned the rude mantel-piece, and scattered their fragrance through the room. On the white pine table were shells fantastically arranged around a large Bible. The bed-quilt was of white cotton, knotted in imitation of Marseilles quilts, and the whole evinced a refined and pure taste.

“O, how pretty!” said Esther. “What

beautiful flowers ! I have not seen such since I left my own dear plants ! ” and a tear started to her eye at the thought of what she had lost. But she brushed it hastily away, and, lifting her eyes to heaven, said “ Great Father, help me to be thankful for these thy innumerable blessings ! ”

The sweet voices of negro children singing, attracted her attention ; she looked from the window towards the place from whence the sound proceeded, and exclaimed, “ Beautiful ! beautiful ! ”

In an arbor of jessamine, roses and convolvulus, sat the negro pair ; a Bible was open on the knees of the man, while three little children were clinging round in fond embrace. The mother was teaching them to sing a morning hymn of gratitude. Her voice, so rich and full, vibrated, not only on the ear, but on the heart of the listener.

“ Are these the roses, dipped in ink, of which I was dreaming ? ” said Esther, involuntarily. Then, turning to the glass, she sighed, “ I, too, am a negro ! ” She looked again ; her skin was white, compared with theirs, and she could see her

father's look in her own face. "Alas!" sighed she again, "I'm stamped, though I see it not!" and she burst into tears. Then, checking herself with a mighty effort, she caught the words, "Thanks to Thee, Giver of good!" and repeated the strain in a subdued voice.

She was nearly dressed, when Grasiella, as her husband called her, entered, and inquired, kindly, after her health, and showed her all those little attentions which the stranger so gratefully receives.

The day passed pleasantly away. There were many new sights for Esther, and various things for her to do. She could look after the little ones, and care for the flowers, feed the chickens, and fill up the intervals with crocheting. So true is it that persons of industrious habits find something to do in all places, and at all times. It was well for Esther that the little children attached themselves to her;—their prattle amused, and their innocent caresses diverted her.

When James came in from work, in the evening, his buoyant spirit and lively conversation completely drove away the few misty clouds that

had hung over the lonely girl, and she joined heartily with them in the song of praise, which they never ceased to raise before retiring to their pillow.

Sweet and refreshing sleep lulled Esther into complete forgetfulness of all that had transpired since the death of her father, and when she awoke and found something lying at her feet, she thought it was her pet dog, and called out, "Carlo!" A laugh from the baby restored her to the consciousness of her true situation.

Grasiella congratulated her on her early waking, and greatly surprised her by saying it was nearly noon. Her sleep had fully restored her, and she arose and set herself to work as if at home. Occasionally, she sighed as she thought of the De Lacy's, and longed to speak of him whose memory she dearly cherished. But the words died on her lips ere she could give them utterance; and Grasiella left her no time for reflection. Thus passed three days, quietly, comfortably and cheerfully. The fourth, brought Lucile, with the delightful intelligence that Mr. Brown was far on his way towards home.

“Such a time as he had with his wife!” said Lucile. “He was sure that she knew where Miss Esther was, and swore he would not stir from the place till she brought her to him. At first, she tried to convince him that she had nothing to do with it; but after a while, becoming angry, she threatened to expose him to her friends, and to commence search for Esther as a free person, who had been clandestinely stolen by his agency. This cooled him down, and, after various windings and turnings, he finally took himself off, never once imagining that I had any finger in the business.”

“T was all overruled for Esther’s safety,” said Grasiella. “God always provides for his own children! I’m sure she will be cared for, wherever she goes. She has the true spirit.”

“Please don’t praise me,” said Esther. “I wish I had the true spirit! But, alas! I feel my weaknesses! I am not sufficiently submissive, notwithstanding all that God has done for me.”

“We are all wanting, my dear!” said Lucile. “It is not expected that any one should be perfect in this world. Those who do the best they can, according to the light they have, are good.”

" You are right," responded Esther. " I have had much light, and I feel that, as much has been given me, so also will much be required of me. When I was a little child I was carefully instructed in the way of righteousness; my years passed pleasantly, and my soul was at ease. I looked forward to the troubles of life with a determination to live above them; but, alas! I have not borne them as I ought. I have yet to learn that it is good for me to be afflicted!" Here she burst into tears, and both Lucile and Grasiella caressed and comforted her in the most affectionate manner.

" You are very kind," said Esther. " And, as long as I live I shall have this pleasant home in remembrance. It has been to me like the ark of safety."

" Yes, weary dove!" sang Grasiella, and the little ones chimed in. O, it was sweet to the ear! Esther thought she never heard anything so sweet before.

That night Esther called to mind the various little expressions her father had used, in reference to her, during his last sickness. She fancied she

understood his trouble and anxiety on her account, and only wondered that he should have, at length, concluded to send her to her grandfather. "Why did he not tell me that my mother was black," thought she. "Am I any worse for being so? Is not my God the God of the whites also? Why are colored people despised? Are their souls not precious,—and shall a jewel be valued only by the color of its case? How much father used to say against slavery! Little did he then think that his only child might one day be taken for a slave, and be obliged to hide herself in a negro-hut, to preserve her freedom! What changes! Who could believe that two or three years could bring about so much? I have been very rich and very poor; a lady and a beggar; white, and now—just what I was before. If it is my destiny to live with those people, I will try to be good, like them. I wished to do good by coming to this country; perhaps this is to be my mission. De Lacy! Will he despise me? No, he cannot! He is too generous. But, will he feel towards me as he used to do? That is another thing. It may be that he thinks blacks and

whites should not intermingle ; but he is not like his sister, I am sure he is not. I long to ask something about him. If I live till morning, I think I will. How kind and good he used to be ! Dear father ! how much you loved him ! You were not ashamed to take a black woman for a wife ! But why do I think of being a wife now ! No. I have to labor for my fellow-creatures in another sphere. God help me to be brave ! ” and she wept herself to sleep.

Grasiella had occasion to go into her room. She heard Esther sigh in her sleep, and gently kissed her cheek, still moist with tears. When she went out she told her husband that she thought he would do well to get her conveyed to her grandfather’s as soon as possible. “ For,” said she, “ the poor girl will feel more reconciled when she realizes her true position.”

“ She’s a brave young woman,” said James ; “ and I would do all in my power for her, even if she did not belong to good Uncle Lopez. I’ll tell you, wife, it must be hard for one like her, who has believed herself white, to find that she is a negro. I do pity her from the bottom of my

heart. And I'm sure she's a good Christian. Didn't you hear how beautifully she talked to little Bill? I believe he'll remember what she told him, about God seeing him always, as long as he lives. I know *I* shall."

"She is good and kind," replied the wife. "The children love her dearly. She seems to love them, too. I thought she would have a fit, laughing so hard, to-day. Billy was standing round when it looked dark, just before the shower, and she said to him, 'Billy, look and see if it rains.' Billy ran to the door, and after looking up, and stretching out his little hand, he ran back, saying, 'It don't rain; it only leaks a little!'"

"I will see what we can do about taking Esther, to-morrow," said James, after a few moments' pause. "Lucile thinks it best to paint her face; it would save a world of trouble; but, somehow, I hate to ask her to do it. And—"

"Let's wait for Lucile," interrupted Grasiella. "She has such a nice way of saying what is necessary. I do think she is a remarkable woman, if she is my sister."

"Well you may think so. Everybody thinks

so. She is on the look-out, all the time, to help some one, and seems to know just the right time to act. I never knew a person so quiet as she is. If any one talks with her, she appears too diffident and modest to say much. I heard Mr. Keyes, the keeper of the tavern, tell a gentleman that he did not think he could keep the house without her. His wife depends upon her, to see to all that is going on."

"We never know when to stop talking about her," murmured the sister, and fell asleep.

A little after daybreak, Lucile came, saying that she had leave of absence for the day, and would assist in doing James' work while he took Esther to her friends. She then awoke the young woman, and told her what arrangements she had made, and advised, as a safe and convenient means of taking her, that she should allow her face to be painted black.

Poor Esther! This proposition was an unexpected blow. How could she change the face which God had given her? It was long before she could consent to it. At length, necessity constrained, and, as she cast her eyes in the glass,

she drew back and shuddered. Lucile saw it. "Alas, Esther!" said she, "do you, too, feel it a degradation to be black?"

"No, no, my good friend!" answered the excited girl; "that is not the feeling. I know not what it is. I cannot analyze it."

Many were the kind words and tender admonitions of the two women, as they took leave of her, and good the resolutions of the latter to live as before God, and not in the sight of men.

She had hardly been on board the boat two hours when she had cause to thank God that he had put it into the mind of Lucile to paint her face black. There sat Mrs. Tincum and Sarah De Lacy, and she plainly heard them talking of her.

"Do tell me how they came so reduced!" said Mrs. Tincum.

"I understand that M. Le Gendre had been living on the property of an individual, a distant relative, who was in a foreign country, and had been prevented, by sickness, from asserting his rights, and that monsieur was obliged to flee his country, with his proud daughter, on the old

gentleman's appearance, to prevent legal interference," replied Sarah, tossing her head.

Esther's blood boiled, and her eyes flashed. James beckoned her out of hearing, and whispered in her ear the magic word "*Patience.*"

Two days after, she met her grandfather, a healthy negro of about seventy, who welcomed her with open arms, and, placing her in an odd carriage, drawn by mules, he seated himself at her side, and, as they rode leisurely along, engaged her in sprightly conversation, so that by the time she reached the house she almost forgot her painted face, and that she was, henceforth, to be among the degraded children of Ham.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DE LACY AND HIS COUSIN.

LOUIS DE LACY, having learned that Esther sailed under the care of Mr. Brown, obtained his address, and immediately followed on to Savannah. He arrived at Keyes' Hotel the very day Esther left for her grandfather's. Mr. Keyes gave him all the information he could respecting the girl brought there by Mr. Brown, and of her sudden disappearance, beyond which he knew nothing.

De Lacy was now at a stand, and, for the first time, considerably disheartened. Miss G. had lost the grandfather's name. This was irreparable. Should he go to Mr. Brown, he could not expect satisfaction from so unprincipled a man. Esther had promised to write to Miss G.; but where was that dear child? Could it be that some one had stolen her? He felt that it was not so. A ray of hope flashed across his mind. "God has mys-

teriously snatched her from the grasp of the destroyer," said he to himself. "My beloved, rest in peace! There shall not a hair of her head perish. Not a sparrow falls without the Father's permission."

These consolatory truths encouraged the young man, and he wrote to Miss G. and the deacon, requesting their opinion and advice; then returned to his own home to await God's providence. His people were rejoiced to see him. Each one seemed anxious to render an account of his stewardship, and proud of the just commendation which he received for his fidelity. Not one among them all had failed to do his best to please so kind a master. In leaving them to themselves, De Lacy had felt that he was making an experiment; and, now that it had so well succeeded, his heart was filled with gratitude. Calling them together, he thanked them for the assistance they had rendered him, and, kneeling with them before the family altar, they poured out the incense of praise together, as from one fountain of pure love.

His business was in order; his people diligent and faithful, and there remained little for him to

do with his own hands ; but his mind was fully occupied. Esther was ever present to him ; in his walks, at his meals, by the sick-bed of some poor negro, or teaching the way of peace, he seemed to feel her influence. "Where can she be ?" he would often say aloud.

One day his aunt sent for him in haste.

"Louis," said she, "is it true that you are engaged to be married ?"

"I am."

"And to whom ?"

"A young lady in Paris."

"What did you tell me ?" said she, turning to Sarah.

"That Louis was engaged to a colored woman."

"'T is false !" exclaimed the indignant young man. "I never had such a thought. Not that I do not think a negress preferable to many white ladies," — and here he gave Sarah such a look as she well understood, — "but that my heart has long been betrothed."

"Will you promise," said his aunt, "that you do not intend to marry any black person about

here,—that you will not?" pursued the wicked woman.

"Certainly, I will; upon the word of a man of honor."

"That is all I want, said his aunt. "I am going to Europe to spend a few months, and I wish to prepare for accidents, or sudden death. You know that I purpose to give you two-thirds of my property; but if you disgrace the family by an improper matrimonial alliance, you will forfeit all claims to any of my possessions. I do not know how Sarah could have told me such a strange story about you."

"I do not wish to justify myself, aunt, but you will see for yourself, and before long, or I am mistaken."

Louis was now completely entrapped. He had not thought of Esther in connection with the blacks, and was astonished at the effrontery of his cousin's remarks. She, on the contrary, had had the whole story as a secret from her friend, Mrs. Brown, who knew Gaetano Lopez, had heard the story of his eldest daughter, who was a handsome young lady, marrying a count, and going to

France; and thus she saw the whole at a glance. Fearful that Louis would meet or see her in some way, she determined to prejudice her aunt, and thus throw a barrier in the way of her cousin's happiness. She was conscious that he never would marry *her*, and she meant to prevent his marrying Esther, if possible.

After Louis left his aunt he began to ponder upon the intentions of his cousin. "She has some mischief in hand," thought he. "No doubt she is plotting against me, but I will be upon my guard."

At twilight of the same day he was going quickly down a flight of steps, which led into the garden, whither he was attracted by the cry of an animal in distress, when his foot slipped, and he fell, badly spraining his ankle. He was taken to his chamber, and ordered to remain perfectly quiet for some weeks. This was a drawback to his plans for finding Esther. Though he returned home with a determination to await God's providence, he was not one of those who sit idle, expecting miracles in their favor. He knew that 'God helps him who helps himself,' and trusted

to be guided by the good Spirit, in his inquiries of every family in and about the city. It was no easy or agreeable task, as it had thus far proved ; for every one wished to know who and what the young female could be, in whom he was so much interested. Then he had no clue to her being there, and how could he expect her relations, if he succeeded in finding them, should know where she was ? If Sarah discovered what his projects were, would she not make trouble for him, and might she not even thwart him in his endeavors ?

“ ‘T is hard to be obliged to lie here,” said he. “ But, no doubt, ‘t is all for the best. Some good will certainly come of it, if I do my duty.”

Sarah’s aunt left, as was proposed, and, for some months, she remained mistress of the establishment. Bitter were the complaints she was continually making to Louis of the bad conduct of her household. “ ‘T is impossible to live in peace with them,” she would often say. “ They are thieves and liars. My aunt has spoiled them by indulgence ; but I’ll try to teach them something before she comes back.”

“ How will you teach them ? ” asked Louis.

"How? They'll catch it, I guess! Only yesterday that saucy Cleora took such a lashing as tamed her a little! I was so vexed that I really enjoyed looking on to see her beaten—"

"Cruel, wicked woman!" interrupted Louis.

"'T is easy for you to say that; you, who have had no experience. You chance to be with a set of worn-out old creatures, whose mettle has been brought down long ago. Besides, they see how careless you are of your property, and they mean to feather their own nests, no doubt. Aunt said 't was foolish in you to free the best you had, and keep such poor ones about you."

"Did aunt say that?"

"To be sure she did. Do you doubt my word?"

"Sarah, you ask a serious question. Remember that we are in the sight of Him, who knows the very thoughts of our hearts, and tell me, if I have not reason to doubt your word."

"I don't understand *your* reasoning. I reason to suit myself, and suppose everybody else does the same. You are always talking about God. What do you suppose he cares about you or me,

or our blacks ? Cleora prayed him hard enough yesterday to prevent her being flogged ; but I did n't see that he interfered, or that she screamed any the less because she 's so pious."

" Sarah ! Sarah ! are you such a monster ? Alas ! that we should belong to the same family, and I have not been able to improve you. I fear that you will meet with some terrible calamity. The wicked may not always prosper ; there will be a day of retribution. Every blow that you have so inhumanly inflicted on the poor wretches in your power, will be repeated with tenfold severity, lacerating your soul, unless you repent and turn from your wickedness."

" Well, that 's more of a sermon than I 've heard this long time ! Hope you won't feel it a duty to pray for some terrible thing to happen to me ! "

" How can you be so thoughtless, and talk so lightly of your spiritual welfare ? Tell me if you are happy."

" O, now you touch upon a subject which concerns yourself ! If I am not happy, you know whose fault it is."

"It is your own fault, and not that of any other. You have ability and means of being a useful and profitable member of society ; and you have never tried to use them. As far as I know, you have studied only your own interests, and how can you expect to be happy, or even at peace within yourself? Take my advice, cousin ; try to be kind to those poor creatures about you. Gain their affections ; improve their intellects, at least, if you cannot cultivate their hearts. Occupy yourself constantly, — read, meditate and pray."

"You may do the praying, if you believe in it. I think I have a more exalted idea of God than you have. I don't think he changes his plans, and the natural laws he has established, to please every praying man and woman."

"Do not speak so, I beg of you. It pains me to hear you talk so mockingly. No one ever pretends that God changes his all-wise plans. We pray for strength and courage to bear what is our lot. The physical strength is sometimes unequal to the struggles we are called upon to endure ; but, though nature may cry out, the soul is immovable. If your Cleora be a Christian, she will not

cease to pray, though she was beaten. Poor girl ! I wish I could see her and talk with her. Will you not do me the favor to lend her services while I am lame ? ”

“ I don’t know how I could spare her.”

“ I thought she troubled you, and you would like to be rid of her,” said De Lacy.

“ So I would, if I could find any one to fill her place. She never disappoints me when she promises to do a thing. I complained of her being saucy.”

“ Pray tell me what you call saucy.”

“ Why, she will go away and stay two or three hours at a time, and, when I ask her where she goes, she absolutely refuses to tell. A few days ago she was singing a favorite French air ; I asked her where she learned it. At first she begged to be excused from telling ; then said she would not, unless aunt obliged her to. I told her that aunt left me in her stead, and that she must mind me ; at which she gave me such a look — the hussy ! — as made my blood boil.”

“ And so you had her severely punished for it ? ”

"To be sure I did; and will again, till I teach her how to treat her superiors."

"I do wish you would send her here for a while."

"Well, if you will promise to keep her at work, and be very strict with her, she may come."

"Now, one thing more, Sarah. Will you read that little book on the table? I think 't will please you."

She took it up, read the title, "The Way to be Happy," and, yawning, laid it down, saying, "'T is too religious. I 'll wait till I 'm older before I read such serious works."

The next day Cleora came to De Lacy's. She was a remarkably handsome mulattress, with a bright, intelligent countenance. But her look was sad, and her bandaged arms and swollen neck bespoke the cruelties of her mistress.

As she approached the bed, Louis extended his hand, saying, "I am very glad you have come. I trust we shall mutually benefit each other. From what I hear of you, I feel convinced that

you will be happy, at least while you stay here."

"Happy, sir!" said she, respectfully. "Happy I can never be in slavery! My heavenly Father made his children equal. What is the difference between me and Sarah De Lacy, except that I would not treat the vilest creature living as she treats me, treats all of us? Look at these wounds, and tell me if I can be happy in expectation of the like, if I but look contrary to the wishes of a mistress—a tyrant, I should say."

"The whole system of slavery is an abomination, which I abhor as much as you can, and would gladly do anything in my power to obliterate it from the recollection of mankind. God grant that the time may come when such a word as slave will be unknown!"

"You speak like a Christian," interrupted Cleora. "Yet, why do you, with such principles, hold men in bondage? Are not you a slave-holder? Do they not call you master?"

"In one sense I am a slave-holder, for my people will not accept their liberty. Yet they are free to act for themselves individually. We

are a well-regulated household. With us there is nothing compulsory. Ask my people ; let them speak for themselves. As to calling me master, 't is a habit, a word without meaning among them. I am a brother, a teacher, a minister of Christ."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ESTHER WITH HER RELATIVES.

ESTHER was cordially welcomed by several grown people,—some very black, some whiter, but none so white as herself. These were her uncles and aunts. It was evening when she arrived, and being fatigued she soon retired. In the morning, when she appeared at the breakfast-table, one would have compared her to a “white lily in a bunch of violets.” Her grandfather could not keep his eyes from her face; and his pleasant and cheerful countenance soothed her into a quiet feeling, to which she had long been a stranger. She looked around; there was an air of ease and plenty. On every side she met smiling countenances.

“How pretty she is!” said a little coal-black urchin, smoothing her arm.

“What makes she so white?” said another.

"Grandpa, grandpa!" said a third, "is this the aunty you said was drowned in sea?"

"No, child, 't is that aunty's baby."

"How much she is like her mother!" observed one of the women. "I should have known her anywhere."

"If she is as good she will make us all happy," said the old gentleman.

"Do tell me all about my mother," said Esther. "I could never get my father to speak of her."

"Because she was colored, I suppose," replied Mr. Lopez, seriously. "Yet he loved her very tenderly."

"Indeed he did. I think he did not like to speak of her because it made him sad."

"Esther, my child, there is a prejudice against us. The whites feel themselves our superiors. I was surprised when your father asked my daughter's hand in marriage. I refused, for I saw that her position in society would render her unhappy even with a loving husband. He urged his suit. He said he would live in France, where the people are more generous and more just than here. I

consented to part with my darling, and they sailed for France. You were given to them, and she was taken away. I was almost heartbroken when I heard the news of her death ; but God has been merciful, and given me more sons and daughters in her stead. Esther, we are your colored relatives, 't is true ; but our hearts are warm, and our love as pure as the white man's. Can you, will you be happy to stay with and love us ? Your father requests in his letter that you may go back to France whenever you desire it. I will not contradict his dying wish."

" You are very, very kind, my dear grandfather. I feel, I trust, that I shall soon be a happy member of this happy family. I hope that you will allow me to make myself useful. I have always been accustomed to labor in some way or another for the good of others."

" By all means, Esther. It is a rule of our household that every one shall be fully occupied. Though we appear to have plenty of help, and would be glad to wait upon you, yet we shall leave you to do just as you please. This house and we who are here are at your disposal ; and

any arrangement that you can make, which will contribute to your happiness, we are ready to comply with. Your dear mother used to read to us every morning and evening; perhaps you will do the same. We can read, some of us, but not very well."

"I will do the best I can; but my English is not good. Do you understand French?"

"Not all of us. We should prefer the English," said he, and handed her the old family Bible.

Esther breathed a prayer of thanksgiving that she was with godly people. She opened the New Testament at the first epistle of John, and read the third chapter, in a sweet tone. All listened attentively. It was a pleasing sight. The room was large and neatly furnished. Gay flowers were its chief ornament. A few pictures decorated the walls. The table stood in the centre; grandfather in his large arm-chair, with gray hair and beard, and the beautiful Esther at his side. Around the table, different shades of dark color, and, standing in quiet and listening attitude, numerous domestics, men, women and children, old

and young; some fantastically dressed in gay colors, some in pure white, with high turbans on their heads, and the little ones with just a simple garment thrown over to cover their nudity.

From time to time the old patriarch made some observation on the words read. At the close of the reading they all sang a monotonous kind of chant; and then, after mutual leave-taking and many looks of curiosity and pleasure cast at Esther, they went quietly their several ways.

A cabriolet was brought to the door, and Esther again seated by her grandfather, who wished to show her his property. She was delighted with the luxuriance of the vegetation, and the taste displayed in the laying out of the grounds. She observed that many things reminded her of France.

"No doubt," said the grandfather; "for my master, from whom I learned all that I know of horticulture, and everything else I may say, was a Frenchman."

"Your master, did you say?" exclaimed Esther.

"Yes, my child, I was a slave; but happily a

slave to one of the best of men, who became much attached to me, and treated me like a child ; and, at his death, he gave me my freedom, and more than half of his property. This house and all the land as far west as that large, white mansion, was his property.”

“Who lives in the white house ?” asked Esther.

“Madame De Lacy,” was the answer.

“Is that the one who treated Grasiella so badly ?”

“No, ’t is her brother’s widow. She, too, is a cruel woman. I’m mistaken, though ; she died a short time ago. She had a son, who was too fond of travelling to stay at home. They say he went away as soon as his mother died. I’m not acquainted with him, but I’ve heard many stories about him.”

Poor Esther’s heart beat violently ; and she wished to ask more, but dared not speak for fear of betraying her emotion. After a few moments’ pause, her grandfather continued :

“I have been prospered in all that I have undertaken. God has blessed me beyond meas-

ure. Now that I have you with me, I feel that my cup of mercies is full. I am an old man, child, and cannot expect to see this bright earth much longer; yet I fear not to depart and meet my brothers, black and white, beyond the grave, where all are equal."

They had now approached the white house, and Esther saw many people on the grounds, and, at a distance, a gentleman and lady. She asked, timidly, who they were.

"I believe that is young De Lacy and his cousin Sarah. I suppose they are to be married soon. She is handsome, but too wicked to be a good wife."

Esther sighed heavily.

"I see you are a tender-hearted child. I fear you will see and hear much to disturb your feelings; it must always be so where there are slaves. You will have a fine opportunity of doing good among them."

She did not answer. She strained her eyes to catch a glimpse of De Lacy. His back was towards her. She thought she heard his voice as he turned and entered the house. She sighed,

and the tears chased each other silently down her cheeks. Hard was the struggle to become calm and cheerful. Once or twice she almost wished that she could hear something that would disgust her, that she might the more easily drive him from her thoughts. "But," said she, "he was so good! He must still be good! It is evident that grandfather knows but little about him."

"How quiet you are, child! Don't you like this drive?"

"O, yes, sir! very much. I was thinking—"

"Thinking what, my child?"

"About the De Lacys."

"You are, like all other girls, inquisitive, I see. I suppose you don't expect to become acquainted with them. They would no more associate with us than with their cattle."

"Pray, why not?" said Esther, eagerly.

"What a question! Well, I see you have to learn that it is one thing to be white, and another black."

"I shall try not to care anything about it; but

to direct all my efforts to the good of people of my own color."

"That is right. Then you will do good to all mankind, for you are white enough for the whites, and black enough for us." And the old man laughed as he patted Esther on the shoulder.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ESTHER IN HER LOWLY HOME.

DINNER was served in good style, but Esther could eat none. She complained of headache, and begged to be left to the quiet of her own chamber. When alone, she wept and prayed. She accused herself of ingratitude to that gracious Father, who had snatched her from the hand of the wicked, and placed her among kind friends, in a land flowing with milk and honey. She begged to be forgiven, with the earnestness of a sincere penitent. She looked at herself; she thought she saw that there was but little difference between her and her friends; she was humbled and grieved to think that she had feared to be called a negress. "Alas!" sighed she; "who will sympathize with and counsel me? I am weak, too weak to depend upon myself. Dear father! kind friends, who used to guide my wandering feet! may I not now address you? Yes, yes! If

I live till to-morrow, I will write to Mr. Day, and to Miss G. I can find work to take me from my sad thoughts. I will overcome this weakness. De Lacy! De Lacy! I'll not disturb your peace. If Sarah is destined for you, God grant that you may both be happy!"

Then she threw herself upon the bed, and wept again. After a while, nature was exhausted, and she fell into a deep sleep, from which she was not aroused by her aunt coming into her chamber and putting things in order for the night.

When she awoke, the moon was shining brightly. Her head was clear, and her mind calm. She sat down at an open window, where the perfume of the orange-flower was wafted, by gentle breezes, to her. The rays of the moon were dancing and sparkling in the gushing fountain; while, now and then, a whistle or hum of negro voice broke the silence of the evening hour.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Esther. "This is now to be my own dear home! I will not be a shadow where all is so bright! To-morrow I'll begin to make myself useful in some way. I can

read,—that will please all the family. Then, perhaps, I can teach the children, and do some light things about the house ; and I can take care of the plants. I will get grandfather to buy me a pianoforte, and some music, and I will study so as to teach them all to sing. Music will be a great thing for us here. I can never forget my music-teacher, but I must try to bury him in my heart. I hope I shall not see him. It is well for me that there is no communication between the families. Who knows but that he thinks me dead ? Well, I am, as it were, dead to him."

Just then the sound of voices, beneath the window attracted her attention. She looked out; there were a man and woman, seated upon a bank, in earnest conversation.

"I cannot live so much longer. My patience will not hold out," said the woman, mournfully.

"Dear, good Cleora ! try, for my sake, a little longer. I am getting along nicely, and shall soon have money enough to buy your freedom. Master Lopez helps me. He says that he will go to the old lady, the first chance he has, when her niece is out of the way, so that he can make a trade for

us. How I wish that I could change places with you, we are so happy here ! ”

“ Alas ! ” replied the woman, “ we are abused beyond measure. Our overseer is cruel enough, but cannot compare with Sarah. I have hardly a moment to myself. This visit I take from the few hours’ rest allotted me. And once or twice she has missed me, and tried to find out where I go. I dare not tell, lest I be deprived entirely of seeing you.”

“ We must contrive to have you more with us,” said the man. “ A white lady is here. They say she is master’s grandchild. She reads to us. O, you must hear her ! ’T would do your soul good ! ”

“ I should be so glad to hear reading,— to learn to read myself. Sometimes, when I am sorely vexed, I keep my tongue still by thinking of the passages of Scripture you have taught me.”

“ Can’t you steal away in the morning without being missed ? I will come and do your work.”

“ Perhaps I can. Sarah De Lacy never rises till almost noon ; and we are all friendly, and try to help each other.”

“Good!” said Esther, to herself. “I must befriend this Cleora. What is my misfortune compared with hers?” And, trembling at the thought that she, too, might have been a slave, she fell upon her knees, and offered a heartfelt tribute of gratitude to the great Invisible, who mysteriously guides us through the varied paths of life.

At sunrise the next morning she was up, and, to use her own expression, ready for action. She had fortified herself by prayer, and felt strong to contend with the rebellious feelings of her own heart. Outwardly, there was nothing to trouble her, and to govern herself would, henceforth, be the great object of her solicitude.

“Bless you, Esther, dear! how pale you look!” exclaimed her affectionate grandparent. “Are you sick?”

“O, no!” said she, with a cheerful and assuring smile, which at once dissipated his solicitude.

When the servants collected to hear the reading of the Bible, Esther looked inquiringly for a new comer. There was a face she had not seen before, and she involuntarily gave a nod of recogni-

tion, which was responded to with an ease and elegance which might have graced a princess.

After they had left the room, M. Lopez asked Esther what he could do for her pleasure or happiness, and she promptly and frankly told him that she wished a piano-forte and music, as soon as he could conveniently procure them.

“What will become of grandfather?” said one of the daughters. “He is always in ecstasy at the sound of music. What will he do if you are a musician?”

“I shall live longer, die happier, and be better prepared for heaven,” replied he. “I’ll go immediately, and order the instrument, and, whatever else my child may desire. God be praised that the means are not wanting! Money enough for all our simple needs.” And, as if inspirited with new life, the old gentleman stepped off like a young man.

“How glad we are that you have chosen music!” said three or four of the company. “It will be so pleasant, and make father so cheerful!”

“We love it! we love it!” exclaimed several little ones, dancing and singing in childish glee.

Esther now sat down and wrote to her friends :

“I am,” said she, to Miss G., “very happily situated, with the kindest and best of people. Want no longer stares me in the face, and I look forward to a quiet and retired life of usefulness, when, by imitating your good example, I may be to some unfortunate what you have so kindly been to me. God bless you in your labors of love, and repay you tenfold in the glorious kingdom of rest !

“Remember me most respectfully to Mr. A., and tell him that, while I thank him for all the trouble he took on my account, I must warn him not to trust Mr. Brown again. He is a wicked man, and my escape from him was a wonderful interposition of that kind Providence who made me acquainted with you.

“If you feel that you can write to the grandchild of a colored man, I shall be honored and improved by your correspondence.

“Address care of Gaetano Lopez, St. Augustine.

“Yours most affectionately,

“ESTHER LE GENDRE.”

To her nurse, she said :

“ Dearest of those whom God has spared to me ! I am no longer the admiration of white beaux and fine ladies, for I am a colored girl ! Not that I have changed color, but that, in finding my relatives, I find myself the descendant of a negro. Is it not strange that we never discovered it in France, while here every one who puts his eye upon me sees it in a twinkle ? Don’t think that it troubles me. At first, I acknowledge, I wished to persuade myself that it was not so ; but now I am quite reconciled to be with the blacks, and one of them. My uncle is an excellent man. His children, as far as I can judge, are very amiable ; they treat me with the utmost kindness and attention, and I should be basely ungrateful did I not respect and esteem them. Only to think, my dear friend, that I came near being stolen and sold into slavery ! I am frightened when I think of it. A woman, whom I took to be a servant, at the inn where we stopped, rescued me. How shall I repay such a debt of gratitude ? If you write to M. De Lacy, please not mention me. I think,

I believe, that I am not influenced by pride, in making this request. He is our neighbor, as also his cousin Sarah, of whom you have often heard him speak. It is thought that he is about to marry her, and as I am,—feeling that I have no longer any claim upon his promises or his affections,—I do not wish to cause him any unpleasant sensations, or make myself an object of contempt to Sarah, who is said to be a very proud and cruel woman. It was very hard for me to give up the thought of being, at some future time, united to Louis. But the struggle is past. Duty points me to a course entirely different from anything I had ever conceived. Tell your good husband that I am well off, and mean to make myself happy by an active life. Thanks to his good example and instruction, I feel competent to do much.

“I wish you could both see me at this moment, completely surrounded by little black cherubs;—some climbing on my chair and patting my cheek, curling my hair and kissing me; others feeling my bare arms; here a pair of bright eyes staring at the paper on which I am writing, and there a

little hand extended to me with a bunch of bright red flowers.

“I am to have a piano and music ; and I hope to teach all these little ones to sing praises to the good God who has blessed both them and me with loving hearts for each other. You will love me none the less for being where and what I am. I know you will not, for my heart is true in its first attachment to you.

“Write and tell me all about the folks—Kate, in particular. How I should like to have her here ! I could devote so much time to her !

“What is uncle doing ? How does he feel towards me, now that father is dead ?

“I do really feel quite happy. All is bright and beautiful, though the beauty is not so chaste and pure as in father’s — uncle’s house, I mean, in Paris.

“Your Affectionate

“ESTHER.”

By the time these letters were folded, grandfather returned.

In about a week the music came, and Esther

practised diligently. Every day she tried to teach the little ones, and before long she was fully employed from morning till night. Among the rest, Cleora occasionally stole in to learn some little air, and it was this which had occasioned the trouble with her mistress, Sarah.

Grasiella now and then paid Uncle Lopez a visit; and the little ones were left a few days with Miss Esther, who gladly taught them with the other little ones. Though M. Lopez was too old to sing himself, or rather to learn to sing, for he was a natural singer, yet he was never tired of listening. The old gentleman seemed to be renewing his youth in Esther's society.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MEETING WITH DE LACY.

“WELL,” said Louis to Cleora, one day, when she returned from her singing lesson, “how pleased you look! What good thing has happened to you?”

“O, I am so thankful to learn to sing, sir!”

“Indeed! I wish I had thought of it; I might have been teaching you all this time. Where do you go to learn?”

“At M. Lopez’s. His daughter plays beautifully, and she teaches all of us who can get time to go to her. I did feel somewhat rebellious when I received that whipping. I prayed, and felt that God did not listen; but now I see that, as you said, ‘t was all for the best.”

“Certainly, the whipping brought you here, and I hope will keep you here, or at least prevent Sarah ill-treating you again. I mean to take care of you till aunt comes, and then I shall ask

her to give you to me, and I will give you your freedom ! Now, is n't that much good from one lashing ? ”

“Indeed it is ! ” said the grateful woman.

Louis knew how fond the blacks were of music, and he supposed that, as M. Lopez was a man of property, he had provided a teacher for some of his children. The thought of Esther of course was not in that connection.

Summer had passed and autumn commenced before M. De Lacy was able to walk much. Then, as he had lost strength, the physician proposed riding on horseback. Sarah heard the proposition with delight, for she was fond of riding ; and, as she said, wished to go with Louis to take care of him.

Often as he looked at her, gracefully guiding her horse, he wished it were Esther. Several times he was minded to ask her, when in good humor, if she knew or had heard of that unfortunate young woman ; but he feared to provoke her jealousy. Weeks and weeks had passed, and the answers to his many letter brought no intelligence to ease his mind. He was now in better health,

and hoped to act, though he hardly knew what he ought to do. He was very impatient to receive letters from France. His cousin's came regularly ; upon *his* there was no dependence, — what did it mean ? If he spoke of the deacon and his wife, Sarah jeered him.

“ O, they have forgotten you by this time ! I am informed that they live in great style now. They have become quite worldly since the old gentleman manages matters for them.”

She was fond of displaying her horsemanship, and trying different horses. She saw that she was a better rider than her cousin, and loved to excite his fears for her safety. One day, when she had taken particular pains to dress herself in a very becoming manner, she proposed racing for a short distance. Her appearance was attractive, and people crowded together to see the beautiful rider. While in centre of the town, Louis rode by her side ; but when drawing near to their homes, on the outskirts, and more out of sight of a gaping multitude, he absolutely refused to go so fast, and told her that he would never ride with her again if she wished to make such a display.

This irritated the lady, who pranced off in high dudgeon. Within a short distance of home, her horse took fright at a fallen tree, and became unmanageable. Dashing furiously along, he threw her upon a heap of stones, and, springing a wall, was caught by one of M. Lopez's domestics. The old gentleman chanced to be near with some workmen. They took up the mangled body, and, fearing life would be extinct ere they could reach her home, they carried her into the house, and dispatched a man for different physicians. All this was done so quickly, that Louis, who was jogging thoughtfully and leisurely along, unconscious that anything had happened, was surprised by a doctor telling him that he was called in haste to his cousin. He rode rapidly to his aunt's,—but Sarah was not there,—then to his own house; he could learn nothing of the matter. At the gate he met Cleora. She gave him all the particulars, and informed him that it was useless for him to go over to M. Lopez's, as Miss Sarah was so dangerously hurt, that the physicians would allow no one to come near her but one lady and herself. "I ran home for more linen," said she. "Pray,

don't come yet; you can do no good, and her groans will make you sick."

"But must she not be brought home?" said Louis.

"O, no! it will not do to move her; besides, she is better off there. The lady who is with her seems to know just what to do, and she is more calm and collected than any of us could be. Don't come yet," repeated she, and bounded into the house. She soon found what she needed, and left, promising to send messengers as often as any change took place.

Louis felt that Cleora was solicitous for his health, yet he wished to see his cousin, and to hear from the physician the extent of the injury. He blamed himself for allowing her to ride alone. It seemed a duty to go to her, and yet he felt a delicacy in doing so.

"I wish that she had been brought home at once," said he;—"it would save a world of trouble. Alas! if she be snatched away in the midst of her wickedness! God be merciful to us, sinners!" And he paced the room in an excited state of feeling.

Messengers from time to time informed him that Sarah still lived ; but this was not sufficient,—he must go to the house himself. M. Lopez met him with the urbanity of a well-bred gentleman. They sat and conversed socially together, and Louis departed, promising to come again the next day. It was twilight when he left ; and, attracted by a fine grove, he strolled round the side of the house. The opening of a window caused him to look up. He sprang forward, raised his arms, but the window closed, and he walked back and forth, vainly striving to catch another glance of that face so much like Esther's. He returned home, shut himself in his chamber, tried to sleep, but in vain. At midnight he rose, dressed himself hastily, and again stood before the window. The moon shone brightly. He looked up, and there sat Esther, with her face against the pane, just as he saw her for the first time in Paris.

“Esther, dear Esther !” he exclaimed.

She rose, and waved her hand. He beckoned her to come to him. His cousin, her color, the time of night, all were in the instant forgotten and she flew to meet him.

“Dear Esther !”

“Dear Louis !” was all that they could utter. She took him by the hand, and led him into the room in which she gave her music lessons. To all his questions she answered with the same childish simplicity, which had won his heart at first. And when she told him that the fear of exposing her mother’s family had prevented her letting him know where she was, he burst into tears.

“My own dear Esther !” said he ; “I loved you, not for your wealth or your beauty, but for the purity of your soul. I have not for a moment ceased to love, I might say, to think of you ; and, let what may happen, I shall never cease to love you !”

“Then you were not about to marry your cousin ?” said she, inquiringly.

“God forbid that I should be so punished !” said he. “How could you think so ?”

“Grandfather told it me. But stay, I must see my patient.” And she left him, to look after Sarah.

Cleora saw her leave the room, and had taken her place at the bedside of the sufferer.

"God be praised!" whispered Esther, as she approached. "I have found my dear, and long-lost friend."

The next morning Louis took Esther's Bible, and read to the admiring group. M. Lopez declared that he very much resembled his son, Le Gendre; and when Louis told him that Esther was promised to him, he made no objection to giving her up. Grasiella and Lucile were sent for, that they might all rejoice together. Louis wrote to his aunt, giving her a brief account of Esther, and all that had happened during her absence.

Sarah's head was much injured, and she was a great sufferer for a long time. Louis, Esther and Cleora watched with her in turn. She was often delirious, and her ravings and fearful exclamations bespoke the agony of her mind. At these times they would pray with, or sing some soothing air, which often quieted her.

The business of his aunt devolving on him, Louis set about making such improvements as he could. In the first place, he forbade a blow being struck till further orders. He talked seriously

and heartily with the overseer, whom he persuaded into comparative gentleness. After a while, by repeated acts of kindness, he secured the good-will of that hard man, who opened his heart and unburthened his conscience by acknowledging that he had aided and abetted Sarah in the concealment and hiding of letters for many years; that she had bribed him by threats and promises, and he had scarcely felt any repugnance at doing her bidding, till he was obliged to whip Cleora; but the prayers of that poor girl pierced his soul, and the sight of Sarah disgusted him. He added that when he heard she had fallen from her horse, he was overjoyed, and had only hoped that it would prove the death of her.

Louis felt at liberty to hunt for letters belonging to himself. A female servant brought him the last package from Paris, in which was a letter from the deacon, which read as follows :

“ DEAR LOUIS : Although we have written so many times without receiving an answer from you, we are not discouraged. This I trust will reach you, as I shall send it across the water by a

friend. I am sure something has happened to our letters. I say ours, for I know that you have written to me, since you are yet in the land of the living.

“I have to inform Esther, who, I understand, is your next neighbor, though you know it not, that her uncle is dead. He has left no will; consequently she is sole heir to all his possessions. We will do the best we can to have everything as it used to be, so that, when she returns to her own house, she may find herself at home. She will miss her dear father; but will not her heavenly Parent give her some other stout and manly heart to rest upon? Ask this to her old friend Louis. If I am not much mistaken, he will love her none the less for being faithful in her calling.

“All are impatient to see Esther. Kate is quite a respectable sort of a person. You will be surprised to find how much she has improved.

“Come Esther, come Louis, come quickly.

“Yours,

G. DAY.”

Both the young people were thankful for the property, that they might have the means of doing good.

"Now you can free your own people, and Cleora," said Esther. "And I can make Grasiella and her sister a handsome present. It will be no matter if your aunt does disinherit you; I shall have enough for us all. How are all things brought about for my good! I am unworthy of such innumerable blessings!"

Esther would have delayed their marriage till they returned to France, but Louis would not hear of it. "I must make my good people acquainted with you," said he.

"But the white people will talk so much about us," insisted she.

"And why should we care for them, or what they say? Are we not sufficient for each other? And can we not be happy, as we have been, in helping those poor creatures, who have so few to be interested in them?"

"I am willing to do what you judge for the best. I will even live here, if you like, and devote myself to the education and improvement of the blacks," said Esther.

"Can you, will you sacrifice all that you might enjoy in France for the good of these?" exclaimed the enraptured philanthropist.

"It is even so; and no merit to me for it," answered she. "I have learned to love them; they are affectionate and faithful, and I am sure that I can be happy, anywhere, with you!"

"We will not be hasty in our plans. This is a matter which requires reflection and prayer. Now, dearest," added he, "I see nothing to prevent our being united here in your grandfather's house. Shall we say next week?"

"I am willing," was the reply.

Sarah's head was better, and the physician said it would be safe to take her home; but she refused to be moved. Her eyes had been bandaged, so that she did not see Esther. Cleora's voice she recognized, and had more than once thanked her for her kindness. Louis spent much time in conversation with her, and often she exhibited signs of penitence for her past wickedness. One day she said to him, "Who is the sweet young woman who does so much for me? She cannot be a colored girl; she is very refined."

"Does not her voice remind you of some one in France?" asked Louis.

"I do not think of any such person. Among

all my acquaintances there is no one who could have done what she has for me. Really, Louis, I believe that I am more indebted to her and Cleora for my life, than I am to the doctors."

"Thank God that you feel so, cousin! I trust that this accident will be the means of making you view life in a different light. How do you feel about prayer now? Do you like to hear it, — to pray yourself?"

"I hardly know," replied she. "My mind wanders. I cannot think of anything clearly. But I wish to know who is so kind to me!"

"God, your Father in heaven, is kind to you, and all of us."

"I know that; but the woman whose gentle hand has so many times soothed my aching head," said she, earnestly.

"Do you think you will try to love her, if I tell you?"

"I do love her! I am not a monster, to be insensible to such kindness! I have known that she was near me night after night, and seemed to me as mother did when I was an innocent child."

Louis could not help pronouncing the name of Esther Le Gendre, with a tremulous voice.

"Is it possible!" said Sarah. "I thought I was dreaming when I heard her and Cleora talking about you. Am I not in my own chamber?"

"No, dear cousin. You were brought into M. Lopez's."

"O, yes! I remember, they wanted to take me home; but I am better off here. Where is aunt? I have many things to say to her. Do you think I shall get well?"

"No doubt you will, and help us carry out our plans. You will have learned what it is to suffer, and will have different views and feelings. But we must not talk so much, 't will worry you."

Contrary to their expectations, she passed a quiet night after this conversation.

When she began rapidly to improve, Esther devoted less time to her than she had hitherto done, and assisted Louis more in the arrangement and ordering of the two households under his care.

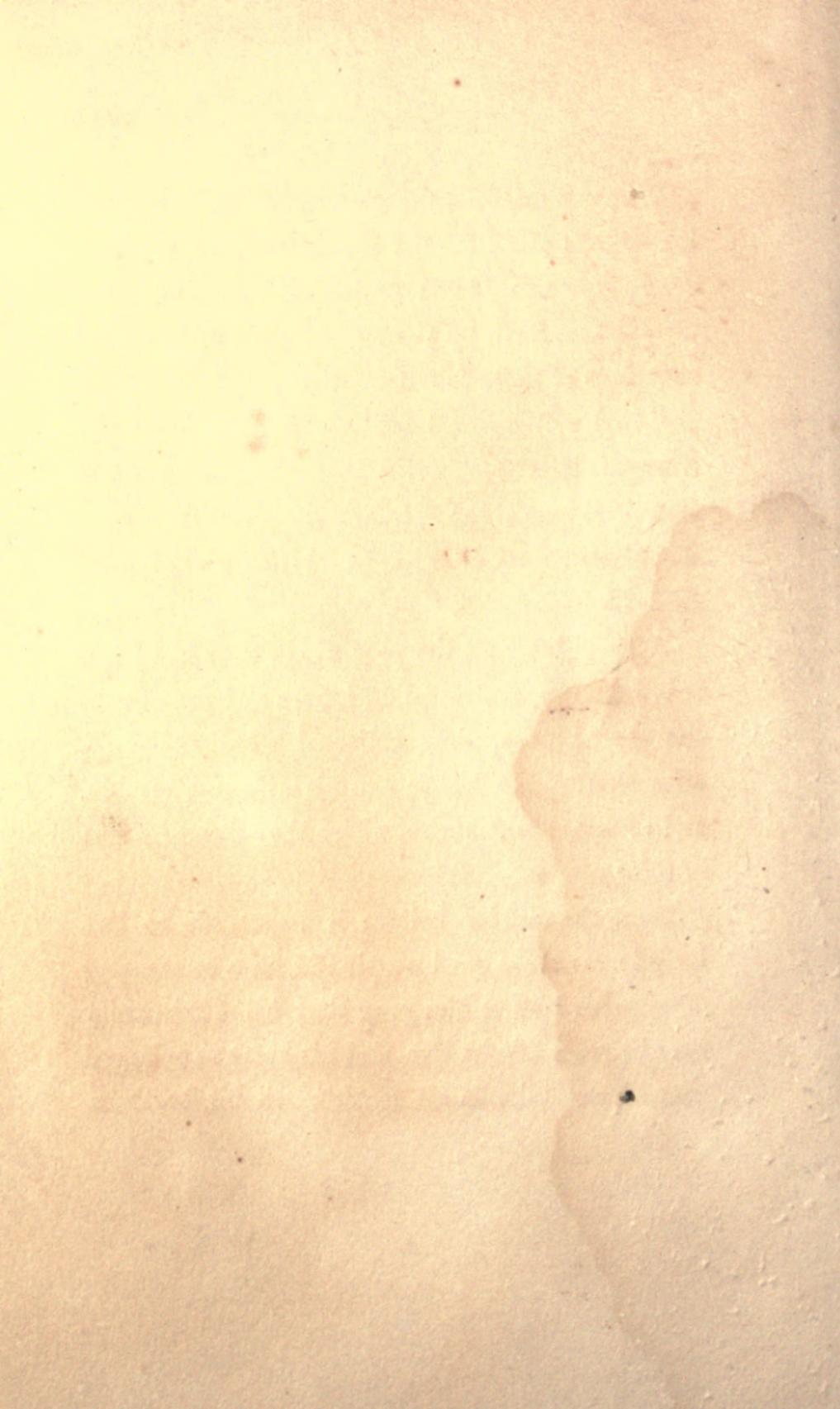
Before their aunt returned, they sailed for France, promising the good grandfather a speedy return.

Who can describe the pleasure of such a meeting as took place in the family-room of Le Gendre ? How many tears, praises, and thanksgivings, were drawn forth by the mutual tales of trials and sufferings of those four Christian people !

“ God will never leave nor forsake those who trust in Him ! ” said the deacon. “ Esther has passed through the furnace of affliction. May she brighten us all with the lustre of her good deeds ! ”

After visiting all the poor whom they had heretofore known, and sending letters and presents to the absent ones, they collected what remained, after making the deacon and his wife comfortable, and returned to America, where they formed a sort of colony.

Does the reader believe it impossible to live happily, as these good people did, in a community of negroes ? Let him pray that his Christianity may be more Christ-like, and his heart so enlarged that he can take in all mankind as his brothers.



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